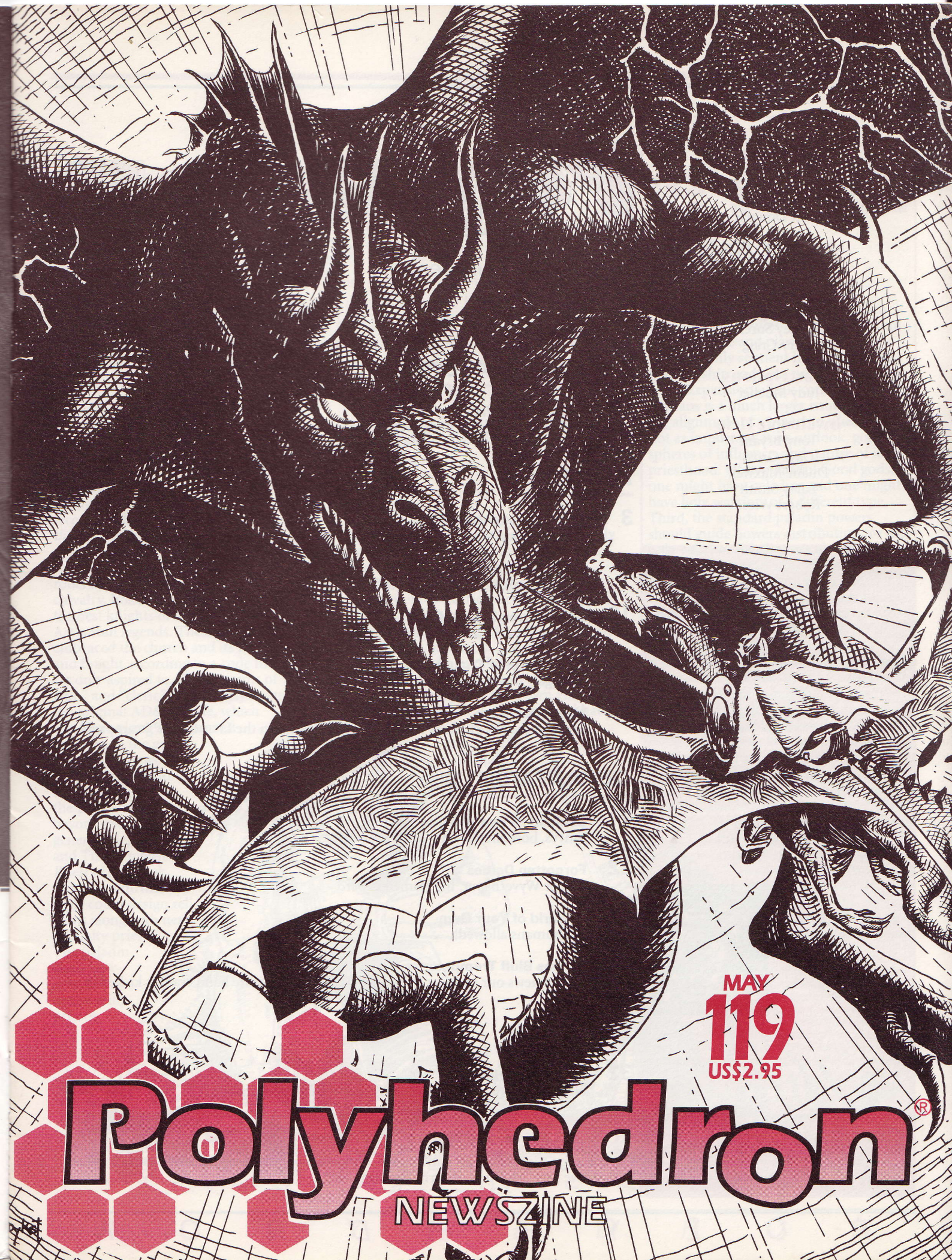

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Polyhedron® NEWSZINE

Volume 16, Number 4
Issue #119

SPECIAL FEATURE

13 **The Endless War**
War of the Wyrms: Orson Wells' nightmare

FEATURES

3 **Champions of the Faith**
Paladin? I gotcher paladin right here...

6 **Knighthood of the Dove**
Peaceful knights who knock heads

10 **Role-Playing First Aid**
Can we get a medic over here?

18 **Druid Circle of Chauntea**
Strangely unaffected by the Ravens Bluff War

30 **Network FAQ**
Introducing the *Faiths & Avatars* game accessory in the LIVING CITY™ campagin

DEPARTMENTS

7 **Elminster's Everwinking Eye**
Emrys, bottleneck of the Border Kingdoms

22 **Forgotten Deities**
Finder Wyvernspur, the Nameless Bard

25 **A World of Your Own**
No humans allowed!

31 **Ravens Bluff Trumpeter**
All the news our scribes could copy 40,000 times before hand cramps kicked in

EDITORIAL

32 **Notes from HQ**
Network rights and responsibilities, and GEN CON® updates

COVER: Too monstrous for a mere logo, Onysablet relocated our entire masthead in her destructive fury (courtesy of Terry Dykstra).

Champions of the Faith

Paladin-esque NPCs for Any AD&D® Game Religion

"Thou man which shall enter this ship, beware that thou be in steadfast belief, for I am faith. And therefore beware how thou doest enter but if thou be steadfast, for and thou fail thereof I shall not help thee."
"Now, I pray you, board this ship only if your faith in the Lord is absolute, for He will not suffer on board His ship any whose faith is not perfect."

—The Tale of the Sangreal, from *Le Morte d'Arthur*

by Robert Wiese

Author's note: *This material is not designed for player characters. DMs may choose to allow holy champions as PCs, but trying the characters out as NPCs first is recommended. This material is not part of the Network's LIVING CITY™ campaign.*

The AD&D® game paladin finds its roots in the medieval traditions of chivalry, honor, and purity personified by the best knights of the Round Table in the Arthurian legends. These knights embraced the church and its principles, and fought according to a code that others only aspired to. The concepts of "paladin" and "cleric" were closely related in the original AD&D game, which was fine as long as faiths and religions in the game were ambiguous.

The 2nd Edition, however, expanded the priest class beyond the generic "cleric," and The *Complete Priest's Handbook* went even further. DMs could design religions along with new specialty priests. The paladin class, however, did not evolve with priests; paladins remained attached to certain good-aligned religions. It is time for that to change.

Faith and Ethos

Faith and the tenets of religion differ according to the god worshiped, and holy warriors should reflect the nature of the gods. If Tyr, god of Justice in the FORGOTTEN REALMS® setting, can give special powers to warriors serving his cause, then Thor of Norse myths, Hate of the Newhwon mythology, Corellon Larethian of the elven pantheon, and even Yeenoghu of the gnollish pantheon can empower their chosen warriors. These gods espouse their own ethical and moral standards and have their own causes. Why shouldn't they have their own champions?

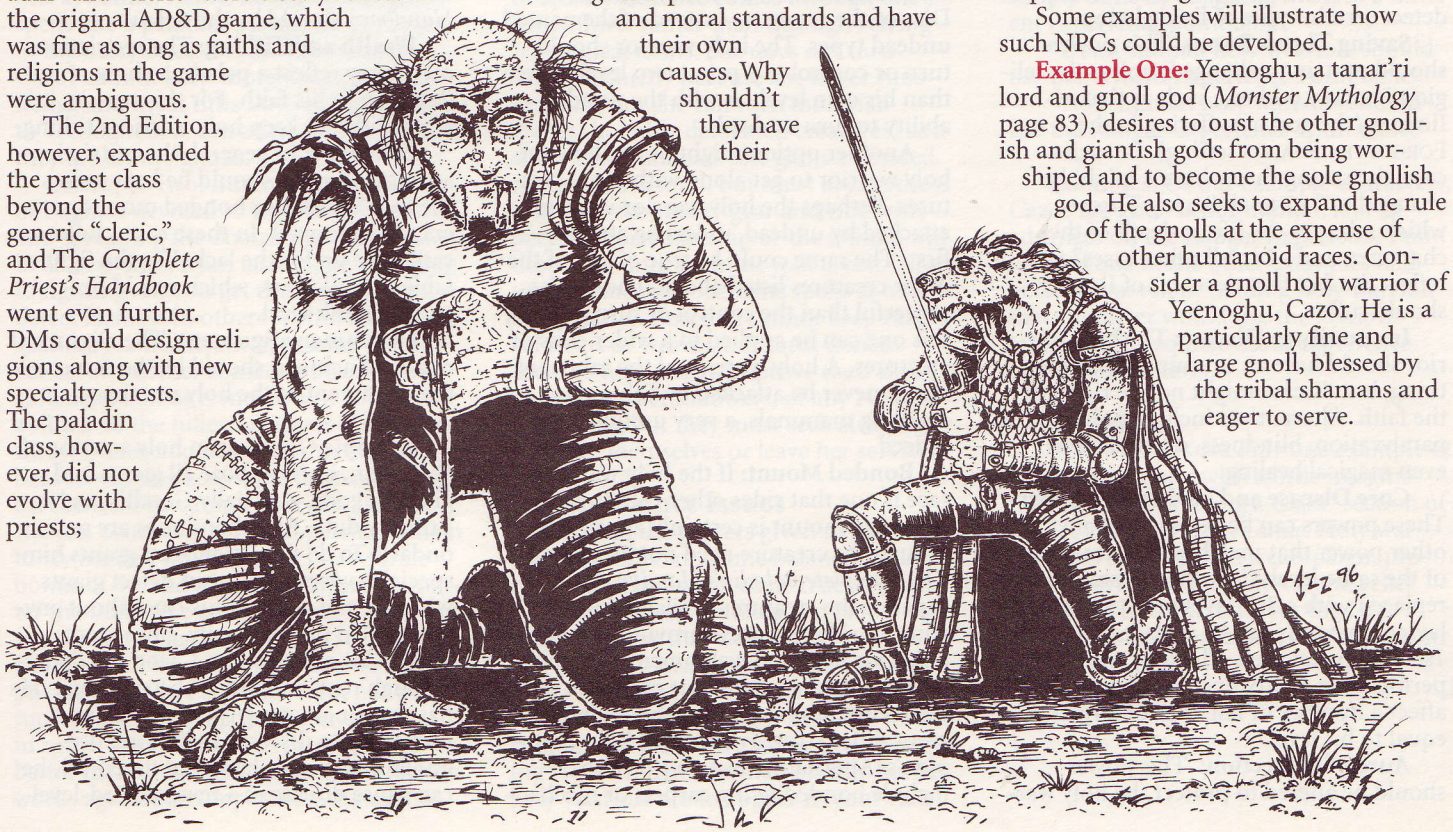
When creating holy warrior characters, keep a few rules in mind to ensure game balance and playability.

First, only sentient humanoid races that worship gods can produce holy warriors. Expansion of this concept to nonhumans is a much larger issue. Second, the alignment of a power in question is not as important as its outlook, goals, spheres of influence, and nature of its priesthood. Of two Lawful Good gods, one might have paladins and one might have holy warriors of a different type. Third, the standard paladin powers should guide powers distribution for the holy warrior. Paladins are already balanced against other classes, and fewer problems will arise with this approach.

Creating a holy warrior is fairly easy. First, derive his principles from the attitudes and goals of his deity and priesthood. Then, assign special powers according to the guidelines below. Finally, make sure the character is balanced with respect to existing character classes.

Some examples will illustrate how such NPCs could be developed.

Example One: Yeenoghu, a tanar'ri lord and gnoll god (*Monster Mythology* page 83), desires to oust the other gnollish and giantish gods from being worshiped and to become the sole gnollish god. He also seeks to expand the rule of the gnolls at the expense of other humanoid races. Consider a gnoll holy warrior of Yeenoghu, Cazor. He is a particularly fine and large gnoll, blessed by the tribal shamans and eager to serve.



Example Two: Lugh, the Celtic god of excellence (*Legends and Lore* page 63) seeks to promote excellence in all endeavors. All of his worshippers must be of some neutral alignment. The Celtic holy champion, Burenna, is the daughter of the local chieftain and a formidable warrior, respected even in a society which frowns on females exhibiting warrior skills.

Powers and Game Mechanics

Paladins, as chosen representatives of their gods and churches, receive special powers which set them above their fighter brethren. Holy warriors also receive powers, but ones more suited to their gods. To create a holy warrior, replace paladin powers with ones more suited to the god and church involved. Imagination is the key here; consult the faith-building section of the *Complete Priest's Handbook* for mental impetus.

Detect Evil Intent: This power should be replaced by a detection power that resembles a 1st- or 2nd-level spell. Examples include detect good intent and detect chaotic intent. Detect non-neutral intent is also perfectly reasonable. Other options include detect invisibility for a god of guardians (such as Helm in the FORGOTTEN REALMS® setting), detect snares and pits, detect traps (like the *find traps* spell), and even detect undead or detect certain types of living beings.

Saving Throw Bonus: This power should remain unchanged, unless the religion is a very odd one such as that of Ilmater (the god of suffering in the FORGOTTEN REALMS setting). In such a case, the saving throw bonus might be changed to "+2 to all Saving Throws which relate to the life or death of the character, and –2 in all other cases" to reflect the fact that devotees of Ilmater should suffer.

Immunity to Disease: The holy warrior should have an immunity to something, but disease might not be right for the faith. Alternatives include poison, paralyzation, blindness, deafness, and even magical healing.

Cure Disease and Laying on Hands: These powers can be replaced by any other power that matches a clerical spell of the same level. Cure disease should be replaced with a 3rd-level priest spell, and laying on hands can be replaced with any 1st-level priest spell. The holy warrior can perform the ability once per day and affect a number of Hit Dice of targets equal to his level.

Aura of Protection: This power should be altered to protect the holy warrior from whatever creatures or things are the mortal enemies of his god or church.

Holy Sword: Holy weapons are good, but they need not be swords. If a holy weapon is necessary for the character, pick the weapon most favored by the deity and develop it using the rules for creating intelligent and special purpose swords in the *DUNGEON MASTER® Guide.* The special powers should be minimized, since the weapon still projects the circle of power that dispels all magic hostile to the holy warrior.

Turning Undead: If the deity does not care about undead, then this power should not be part of the holy warrior's repertoire. If the power is dropped, then the holy warrior should be bolstered in other powers to maintain play balance. However, better solutions present themselves with a little thought.

One alternative is to allow the holy warrior to turn or control a specific class of creatures which are the mortal enemies of his religion. Some creatures that might be considered are faerie creatures (not including elves), creatures from opposing outer planes, sentient plants, or a certain class of animals such as mammals or insects. For example, a holy champion of Lolth might control arachnids and arachnid monsters. Attempts can be resolved on the Undead Turning table in the *DUNGEON MASTER Guide*, using the Hit Dice of the creatures instead of the named undead types. The holy warrior should turn or control as a priest two levels lower than his own level, as with the paladin ability to turn undead.

Another option might be to allow the holy warrior to get along with some creatures. Perhaps the holy warrior is never attacked by undead, unless he attacks first. The same could be true of any of the other creatures listed above. Though less powerful than the control or turn powers, this one can be applied to a wider class of creatures. A holy warrior of the sahuagin might never be attacked by fish or sea-dwelling mammals, a very useful power indeed.

Bonded Mount: If the holy warrior's race is one that rides other creatures, then a bonded mount is certainly appropriate, though the creature need not be a horse. *The Complete Paladin's Handbook* expands the creatures available for paladins to ride and these provide a starting point for further development. Appropriate mounts do not include creatures that the race eats or creatures whose alignment differ strongly from the holy champion's. Alternate things to ride also include bonded flying carpets or mechanical contraptions (for those tinker gnome holy warriors). For cultures that do not ride, this power can be replaced.

The easiest replacement is to give the holy warrior a familiar, using the 1st-level wizard spell *find familiar* and choosing a creature special to the deity in question. A holy champion of Odin might have a raven, for example. A special henchman, lackey, or friend, would also be a good replacement. This person should not be a squire or holy-warrior-in-training, but more of a lifemate or sidekick. Examples of this type of relationship abound in history and in fantasy writing.

Clerical Spells: There is no reason to deny a holy warrior this ability, since all gods grant spells to their priests. In the case of a god of magic, such as Isis (Egyptian pantheon) or Hecate (Greek pantheon), wizard spells might be granted instead.

Restrictions

The restrictions under which paladins operate require little modification when making a holy warrior.

Magical items: Holy champions should be restricted to the magical items they can carry and use. The number can vary, and might be increased if the holy champion lost some other paladin-like powers described above, but the restriction given for paladins in the *Player's Handbook* should be the default.

Wealth and Tithing: The restrictions on money reflect a paladin's show of devotion to his faith. For this reason, it is a good idea to keep holy warriors tithing.

Followers: In general, the restriction against followers should be kept unless the turn undead or bonded mount powers were dropped. In these cases, followers can make up for the lack. Use the fighter table for followers, which would be gained at 9th level.

Henchmen alignment: The alignment of any henchmen should be the same as the alignment of the holy warrior.

Example One: Cazor, holy warrior of Yeenoghu, must oppose all giants and giantish gods, especially Gorellik, as his primary duty. All other duties are secondary. To do this, Yeenoghu grants him special powers. Cazor can detect giants within a one-mile radius (just about anyone can do this normally, since giants make a lot of noise, but Cazor can do it through rock and other obstructions). He has the usual saving throw bonus and immunity to disease (useful because gnolls and ghouls hang out together), he can cause disease as a reversed 3rd-level

priest spell, *cure disease*, and lay on hands to heal himself two hit points per level per day (Yeenoghu is a selfish god, so Cazor cannot share his healing). His aura of protection gives him a +1 bonus to Armor Class against giant-class humanoids, who feel repelled by his presence (his body odor probably has nothing to do with this). He does not have a holy weapon, but if he did it would be a spear or sword. He can command undead, especially ghouls and ghasts, just like priests of Yeenoghu. Since gnolls are not known for their horsemanship, Cazor can make one ghoul his personal companion (yuck). When that ghoul is slain, he can raise up another, but he can only have one at a time. Lastly, he can cast clerical spells like a paladin, though he specializes in the nasty ones. On the minus side, Cazor cannot keep more than 10 magic items, and must tithe 50% of his wealth to Yeenoghu. He can attract followers, but they are always gnolls.

Example Two: Burenna, holy warrior of Lugh, is devoted to traveling the world and spreading the doctrine of excellence in all activities, from farming to sweeping to fighting to...you get the idea. She can detect laziness in others within a 60′ radius by concentration, gaining an indication of whether someone doesn't have sufficient skill or is merely not using their abilities to the fullest. She gets the saving throw bonus and immunity to disease, because disease keeps one from achieving excellence. She cannot cure disease, but she can counsel others and persuade them to try harder, which results in a Morale bonus of +2 and a renewed effort no matter the odds. She cannot lay on hands, but she can command as per the 1st-level cleric spell. Her commands can be a phrase instead of a single word, but they must relate to trying harder or excelling in some way ("Run faster; you can flee better than that!"). Her aura of protection works against incompetence; she cannot be harmed by substandard or crude weapons. She cannot have a holy weapon (though if she did it would be a spear), because excellence comes through one's own efforts rather than through relying on magical items. She does not turn undead, chiefly because she never runs into any, but she can turn fomorian giants (horrible deformed creatures) as a cleric turns undead. She gains a bonded mount at 4th level, but must always dress it in the best quality gear and ride with peerless horsemanship or the animal will desert her and she must wait a year before seeking another. She casts spells as a normal paladin. Burenna cannot keep magical items or wealth, but must donate them to help others improve their skills. She can attract followers, of any Neutral alignment, but they must seek always to improve themselves or leave her service.

Game Balance Issues

Because the powers given to holy warriors are different, game balance issues can arise. This is especially true of demi-humans and non-humans. So before you begin to think that a dwarven holy warrior may be a bearded wonder, consider. Demi-humans have racial abilities that humans do not, and their inability to be paladins serves to give humans a balancing factor. If demi-human or non-human holy warriors are to appear in your campaign as continuing characters, then they need to be restricted in some further way to offset their racial abilities. This can be simply done by assigning them to a different experience point table.

- Demi-human holy warriors should use the Wizard Experience Point table.
- Non-human holy warriors should use the Ranger Experience Point table.

Examples: Of our example characters, Cazor the gnoll is not human, and he advances on the Ranger Experience Point table. If one of the other examples had been a dwarven or halfling holy warrior, that character would use the Wizard table, which requires more experience points at each level.

Conclusion

Holy warriors are only one example of what can be done with a little imagination and the "Creating a Class" section of the *Dungeon Master Guide*. Holy warriors can add depth to a campaign, provide surprise for the players, and relief from the same old thing for the DM. Experiment and have fun; that's what our hobby is all about. ❑

Knights of the Dove

Increase the Peace!

by David Feest, Jr.

Like the Griffons, Hawks, and Golden Roosters, the Knights of the Dove were founded to protect the city of Ravens Bluff in time of war. Many see the Knights of the Dove as a peace-loving order with no martial skill or combat ability. This is a foolish underestimation of a formidable order.

Overview

As any knight will tell you, there cannot be true peace without the ability to defend that peace. This might be the unofficial motto for the Knights of the Dove . Rather than enforcing peace with strongarm tactics however, Doves work through intelligence and negotiation. At the same time, the knights understand that some who would upset the peace of the city are beyond persuasion. Therefore, the Knights of the Dove stand ready to fight valiantly alongside the other knightly orders in defense of Ravens Bluff.

The Knights of the Dove have several goals. Alongside the Golden Roosters, who serve in part to keep up the city's morale, the Doves strive to defend the city and help heal the wounds war inflicts on the population.

As a knighthood dedicated to the city, the Doves also seek to defend Ravens Bluff from both invasion by foreign armies and subversion from within by greedy or power-hungry politicians. As part of their oath of knighthood, they swear to these tenants, vowing to defend the rightful authorities of the city, shield the citizens of the city from harm, refrain from lying, cheating or stealing, and shun those who do.

When Knights of the Dove confront an enemy, they prefer to capture the miscreant and bring him to trial in Ravens Bluff. His subsequent trial and potential punishment then serve as an object lesson to others who would consider endangering the city or its inhabitants.

Should a Dove knight accidentally kill a human, elf, dwarf, gnome, half-elf, halfling, or similar thinking creature who meant no harm, the knight must go to the Knights' Council for a quest to purify his spirit. This does not mean the knight cannot defend himself, but those who strike before understanding circumstances should consider another order.

Knights with nonweapon proficiencies in heraldry, read/write common, and an additional language, and have received the Dove honors of the Red Rose Ring or the Dove Bracelet, have more opportunities. They are eligible to join the ranks of the Dove Emissaries, a diplomatic unit within the Order of the Knights of the Dove that assists with foreign affairs.

To become a Knight of the Dove, a character must squire directly to the order or enter from another order as a knight-squire. All candidates for this knighthood must have reached at least 5th level as a warrior or priest, 6th level as a wizard, or 7th level as a rogue.

Responsibilities

- A Knight of the Dove favors negotiation over bloodshed. Only if negotiations are impossible (such as with monsters), or have failed, will a Dove resort to violence.
- A Dove must attempt to bring those who have wronged the city to justice. This means that the Dove will try to bring an evildoer back alive to the city for trial.
- When Ravens Bluff is at war, the Knights of the Dove are expected to fight alongside the army and the other knights of the city.
- A Knight of the Dove must live within his oath to the order at all times.
- A Knight of the Dove will not refuse aid to a citizen of the city so long as that aid does not go against the knighthood's oath.

Benefits

- At the beginning of any adventure a Knight of the Dove may borrow a *potion of healing* from his temple. The knight is limited to one potion per adventure and must leave a 500-gold piece deposit in case the potion is lost or used during the adventure. If the potion is not used it must be returned, as is the knight's deposit. This is to ensure that the knight may always lend assistance to the citizens of the city.
- In times of war, Knights of the Dove hold the rank of army captain. Rather than lead troops, they often act as advisors in delicate situations. At any time, a Dove Knight may serve as a City Watch member.
- Because Dove Knights are adept at negotiation skills, they gain the etiquette proficiency as a bonus when knighted.
- A Knight of the Dove may write recommendations for a squire's admission to a knightly order.
- The knight qualifies for another knighthood with three fewer chivalry points than those who squire directly to another order.
- The knight receives three Fame points upon being accepted to the order, two Fame points for every knightly honor awarded, and one Fame point for every Chivalry point awarded. These may be divided among any appropriate categories.

Special Honors

Honors may not be claimed; they must be awarded by judges for specific actions written into a particular scenario.

Crystal Paperweight—Given to a knight who uses his mind to discover how an evildoer is cheating the city. The knight and his friends must bring the evildoer in alive to face justice.
The White Rose Ring—Awarded posthumously for saving the life of an innocent at the loss of your own.
The Red Rose Ring—Conferred upon a knight who defeats a powerful monster without deadly weapons or damaging spells. This must be done in defense of others, and the monster must be at least twice the knight'0s level in Hit Dice.
Dove Bracelet—Granted to those who successfully negotiate a peace treaty to end or prevent a war. The treaty must involve serious opponents who otherwise would attempt to kill each other.

Elminster's Everwinking Eye

The Throat of Talduth Vale

by Ed Greenwood

I've had occasions to eat and sleep these past few days while hosting Elminster, but the Old Mage keeps going during my slumbers, filling a small mountain of cassettes with colorful chatter that touches on the Border Kingdoms from time to time. While awake, I've gently probed to learn more about places and people, so as to continue our tour of the Border regions in a manner that (more or less) makes sense. So hearken to the Old Mage's words about a place that's itching for a few good adventurers to ride in and set things right.

Emrys

This fortified town is sometimes called "the Throat of Talduth Vale" thanks to its bottleneck location on the Sheep Road linking the Border Kingdoms with the Shaar's nearby grazing land. Crowned by the massive, no-nonsense battlements of an old central keep, the town stands on a hill at the southern end of a cold, deep lake said to well up from the heart of the world itself. According to Elminster, the lake descends through the Underdark for two miles or more, and is home to "beasts best left undisturbed."

Treacherous bogs drain into Emrysar Lake from the north and stretch right up to the long, sharp, jutting ridge known as the Dragonback. Travelers going east or west must trek overland most of the way to Oeble to pass these natural barriers if they want to avoid Emrys. Most try it once, sigh, and don't bother again.

Taldans come to Emrys for protection in time of war (armories and a sweet water stream are located in underground caverns beneath the central Keep), to sell sheep and wool to outlander merchants in the Bawling Market (named for the din made by the sheep on monthly market days), and for supplies (Emrys is the Vale's main center for ironmongery, feed, pottery, and large gear such as wagons).

Emrys is a crowded place of concentric rubble walls, cobbled streets, and tall, narrow, steep-roofed shops with abodes rising four floors or more above the selling floors. The cellars below are the traditional sites of "candle-shops," small places where workers repair or alter clothing and small items by the light of candles. New goods are not apt to be sold here.

There are only two open spaces within the town walls: the Broad and the Bawling Market. The Broad is given over to the parking of caravan wagons and the marshalling of teams of horses to be harnessed. A space between the two town walls on the southeastern edge of Emrys, it is the only place where the walls are farther apart than the sweep of a street. The Market is the central meeting-place in town, a busy oval space perhaps a quarter of a mile long. On the west, the keep walls frown down. On the east the Church of All Souls ministers to all faiths with a temple of six sanctuaries (Chauntea, Lathander, Tempus, and Tymora predominate).

Lodgings in Emrys tend to be noisy, cramped, and expensive. Many caravan merchants prefer to pay four to six silvers per wagon to camp in one of the nearby fields, and trudge into town by one of the three gates (stabling and hitching fees in town are higher than personal accomodations). Those gates are: the Vigilant Gate to the south; Vale Gate on the northeast; and Sundown Gate to the west. A fourth gate, the southeastern Sunshadow, was blocked up after folk began entering and leaving from the Broad without stopping for inspection and taxation by the Eagles of Emrys (the town guards, who collect levies of one silver piece per handcart, two silver pieces for a palanquin or one-axle cart, and three silver pieces per wagon). Many visiting merchants still defiantly consider the Broad to be a "free merchant stand" territory where the laws and likings of Emrys can be ignored—but the Eagles and their masters disagree.

The lands around Emrys are typical of the "upland" Vale (the less lush, more rolling part of Talduth Vale that lies along the Landrise where the lower Border Kingdoms become the Shaar high plateau): small sheep and root crop farms are laid out in a crazy-quilt of wandering lanes and irregularly-shaped fields separated by high fieldstone walls, with thorn trees and a few felsul standing where walls meet.

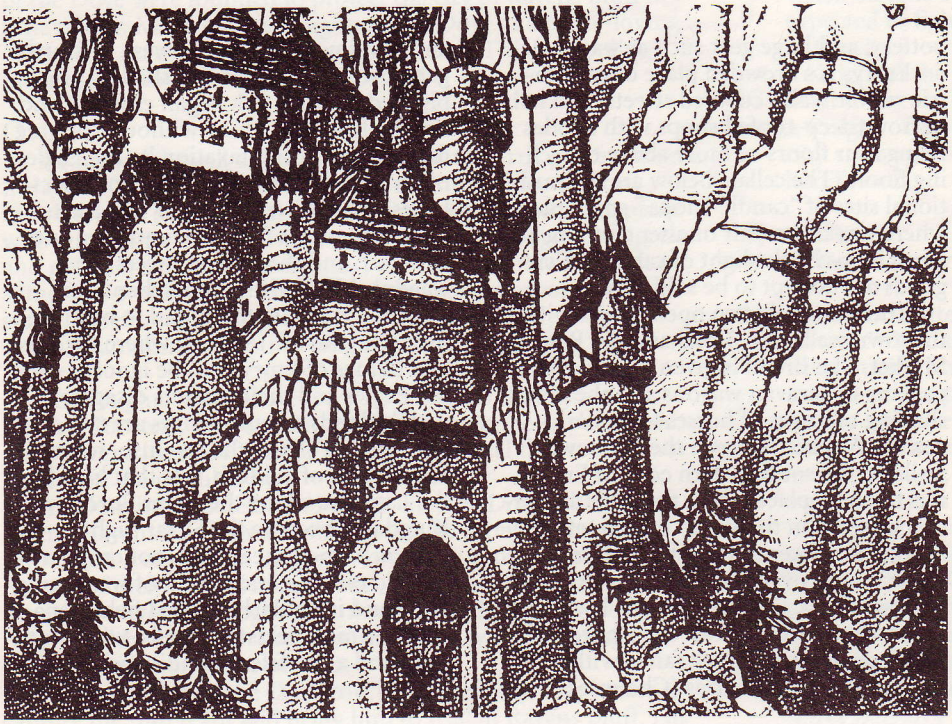
> The Border Kingdoms lie like a dagger pointing eastward from Calimshan. Never forget that—and conduct thyselves accordingly.
>
> —Ildu Mleeritar, prince of Satraps speaking to the *althalan* (unproven younger sons) of Calimshan in Calimport
>
> *Year of the Prince*

The Keep

Emrystarl's Keep is an ancient human-built fortress from the times of Glendarl, a sorcerous realm that preceded the yuan-ti rule of Sselempurrt, the dwarven-and-human trading post of Brokaun, and most recently the human land of Thuntar.

No one alive today remembers who Emrystarl was. Folk share a vague impression of a mighty warrior who died in his keep, old, respected, and undefeated...

with a lot of undiscovered treasure left behind. There are even tales of the old lord's phantom walking in the secret passages that honeycomb the keep walls ("By the Old Lord's Ghost" is a local oath), but greedy adventurers are warned that almost every "secret" passage in the keep has been found and thoroughly explored by now. A silent apparition of a helmed, full-armored warrior has been seen from time to time, and there are even legends of it awakening certain young men and



maidens, leading them to weapons, maps, or missions to be done.... Most Emryans scoff at any notion that Emrystarl still walks among them.

The Dukes

Though Emrys is only a little more than a mile in length, and roughly half that in width (it covers an ovoid hill), it is ruled by a council of six hereditary Grand Merchant Dukes and an elected Imperial Overduke who consider themselves the equals of the rulers of Calimshan, Cormyr, and other great realms.

A flogging in the keep cellars awaits any visitor who belittles the power or status of the seven rulers. They swagger about Emrys or the Vale within sight of the town daily (cynics say this is because they know their power only extends as far as they can see from inside town). There's always at least one Duke (or his personal equerry) on careful watch in the Broad

for challenges to the dignity or authority of the Dukes or the law of Emrys.

Severe affronts against these sacred things earn miscreants a body-brand (the symbol of the Emryan Dukes: a large gold coin surrounded by a circle of six smaller silver ones) and banishment from the town by being "flogged down the streets without delay," with all goods and property forfeit to the "Ducal Hand."

The Dukes long ago seized the best houses in town for their own, and arrived at some painfully blunt understandings with other powerful merchant families in town about the inadvisability of future property seizures belonging to said families. These days the Dukes seldom move into any building they've seized.

As real estate is always both overpriced and in demand in Emrys, the ability to hand out residences gives the Dukes very real power. However, a recent exile hurried back into the city by another gate right after his flogging flight and poisoned all the bottles in the cellars under his former house, causing subsequent carnage among the ducal families and their allies. The incidence of simpler traps built into residences (such as heavy furniture that crashes down to crush anyone sitting in the high seat at the table) has well-nigh evaporated any enthusiasm on the part of the more greedy Dukes for acquisitions and house movings.

The Imperial Overduke was supposed to give all Emryans a say in government to prevent the hereditary Grand Merchant Dukes from becoming tyrannical. In practice though, the elevated commoners (who serve a seven-year term) are quickly corrupted by the supposedly subservient Dukes. Principled or power-hungry Overdukes are usually drugged and then poisoned.

The current Overduke, Shryntuth Hammado, is a pleasure-loving former leatherworker who seems lost in the delights and privileges of rule (wild, wine-soaked parties in particular). The six families who supply Emrys with its hereditary Dukes (and true rulers) are the houses of Bulisstan, Dlanivaer, Klornu, Lylitrath, Orglast, and Relantovir.

The current Dukes are:

- Thalard Bulisstan, a grossly fat, malicious glutton who was once—several lifetimes ago, it seems—a warrior of minor skills [NE hm F3; ST 17, CO 17].
- Melutho Dlanivaer, a dangerously alert fop and talented actor who considers himself "the greatest swordsman south of the Flaming Fist's hold." Melutho uses poisoned blades and skilled bodyguards to support this fancy. He always watches for traitors in town and outlanders who may threaten the Dukes' rule [CE hm F9; DEX 17, IN 17].
- Anather Klornu, a brilliant priest of Shar, who holds rites in a cellar at the bottom of Black Pillar Stair. The pillar stands at the midpoint of the northern edge of the market, holding up a bridge between two shops over Polduk Alley. The stair opens up against its northern face. Klornu schemes to eliminate the other Dukes and make Emrys a holy city of Shar worshippers [NE hm P10; IN 18, WIS 18].
- Irten Lylitrath, a shy, nondescript man who is also a very good watcher, listener, and rememberer. He gains self-confidence by following and slavishly obeying Melutho Dlanivaer [LN hm F1].
- Balos Orglast, a large, coarse bully who gets his pleasure in hurting people, wild game, horses, or anything else that isn't another Duke. He loves brawls and any chance for "some fun." Orglast is the Duke whom average Emryans hate and fear the most; he's expert in the use of drovers' whips, flails, and hurled chairs and bottles [CE hm F7; ST 17, DEX 17].
- Sargar Relantovir, a bearded, close-mouthed, elegant man who enjoys being mysterious and manipulative. He is Melutho's only real rival at deadliness, wariness, and foresight among the Grand Merchant Dukes. Sargar is a closet mage who has taken care to seize all the spells

and items he can from any wizards foolish enough to eat or drink from his sleep-causing drafts...a sleep from which he ensures they never awaken [NE hm F6/W9 dual class; ST 16, DEX 17, IN 18]. He always has magical items handy to deflect an attack from other Dukes or their agents, and has on occasion been called upon to use them. Otherwise, he keeps his mastery of magic a secret.

The Citizens

Despite all the tales of their rulers' corruption, cruelty, and underhandedness, most Emryans support the Dukes, crediting their energetic aggressiveness for giving Emrys its (little) international importance, and trade prosperity. Other citizens keep their hatred of the ducal rule hidden, and obey the Dukes out of fear. There are a few defiant exceptions, however, such as the Masked Ladies of the Bronze Buckler and Butterfly Dance and Gambling Club and an underground group who style themselves the Riders of the Cracked Cauldron. The Riders' name alludes to the steaming cauldron badge of the onetime ruler of Emrys, the fat, jovial High Councilor "Mother" Laddath Hambreth (who died in a Vale hovel after being exiled by the first Merchant Dukes some 300 winters ago).

The Riders play pranks on the Dukes, and occasionally threaten them. Once, the portcullis of the Vale Gate fell on a horse and knight of the Ducal bodyguard a bare armlength ahead of two mounted Dukes. Another time, a fire started in the Overduke's feasting hall. The fleeing guests discovered that a wagon just confiscated from a banished merchant was wedged into a bend in the stairs, quite blocking that way out.

Certain visiting merchants seem to covertly support the efforts of the Riders in hopes of doing away with the present government in Emrys. There are also tales of a masked bandit, Creeping Caladyn, who steals from the Dukes using a little magic and knowledge of the secret passages that "everyone knows" link many cellars and shops all over town.

The Grand Merchant Dukes don't like anyone in Emrys to be important or influential except themselves, so resident adventurers and merchants of note are few. Emryan priests and wizards of any standing are unknown.

Notable Features

Why travel to Emrys at all? Well, it's a prosperous place where people are always eager to buy. Most travelers find the shops unusually well stocked for so small a center, and the merchants charge reasonable rates. Like the merchants themselves, few shops are superb or memorable. A good traveling merchant's wares can shine, and business is usually brisk.

An exception to the mediocrity of local establishments is the Old Barrel Run Tavern, a dark, cheap cellar where locals like to drown their troubles in strong tankards of local brew. Visitors can find low-priced ale and relative anonymity there. The aforementioned Bronze Buckler and Butterfly Dance and Gambling Club is another exception. Popular neither for dancing nor gaming, the escort service of the Masked Ladies, "makes up for lack of skill and luxury with enthusiasm and a lively sense of fun," as one outlander merchant put it. The Dukes have been told to leave "the Old Butterfly" alone or face a revolt of town merchants. Instead, they merely inspect the club often and tax it heavily.

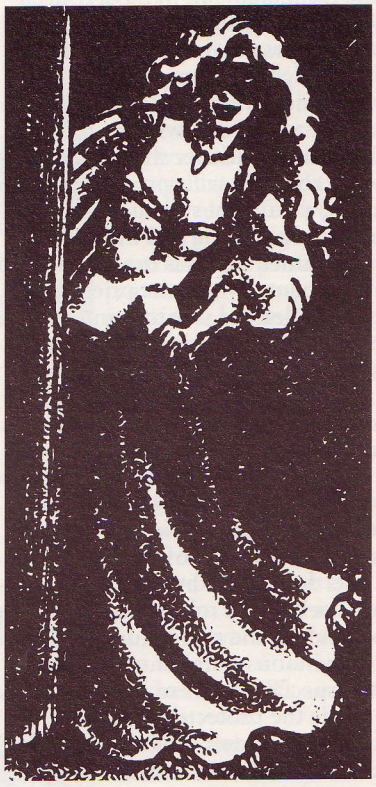
The isolated stone cellars that make up the private chambers of the Butterfly are most of the very few places in Emrys where discreet business can be discussed. Many Masked Ladies put in time doing nothing more intimate than rubbing the shoulders and feet of tired merchants who want to do business without the Dukes' many ears listening in. This is the origin of the Border business expression "I've no more up my sleeves than if a Masked Lady was rubbing my arms!"

Nevertheless, patrons of the Butterfly are warned that the Dukes and their agents visit often, hoping to overhear things of interest. Delicate negotiations are best conducted in a private chamber with a Masked Lady singing a soft ballad between you and its firmly closed door.

From time to time, an exasperated visiting merchant or outlying Taldan farmer growls that "the Dukes must go!" but no one has yet mustered the necessary force. Would-be conquerors are warned that the Dukes are known to have items of spying and slaying magic. They have used them swiftly and mercilessly to quell two revolts and at least four known external takeover attempts thus far. The Dukes also have personal bodyguards (at least a dozen), family retainers, and the Eagles to call upon when trouble erupts.

The town guard consists of hired outlander adventurers. with officers drawn from the families of the Dukes. Their ranks are riddled with spies for the Dukes, and in a constant state of rivalry and intrigue engineered by the Dukes to keep the troops from uniting to overthrow the Ducal rule. Wizards and priests are absent from Emrys because the Eagles patrol throughout Talduth Vale to ensure it. Persistent rumors circulate of an archmage dwelling in Emrys, using the unwitting Dukes as a front to keep order in the town. Stories tell of world-rending magic hurled at any wizard brash or capable enough to seriously challenge the Dukes.

Certainly there have been confrontations between Dukes and traveling mages over the years. Outsider mages disappear or move on without the mayhem one might expect. The ranks of the vanished are even said to include Zhentarim magelings and red wizards. Are they the origin of the phantom apparitions of human skulls seen floating above the Emrysar Bog some nights?



The mysteries at the heart of Emrys remain. What would seem a simple thing to untangle persists from year to year—another interesting feature of the Border Kingdoms.

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Role-playing First Aid

Playing a "Protector" Priest at Home and Away

by Jim Laubacker

The priest or cleric character is a welcome member to any adventuring party, with good combat abilities and a wide range of spells. In a small group, the versatile priest character can take on roles similar to those of the warrior or wizard.

This individual diversity works well in a home campaign, but in most tournaments, parties depend on specialization more than versatility. The priest is an ineffective fighter among better trained warriors, and can rarely dazzle an enemy with spells as well as a wizard.

The priest character should therefore take on a role that will complement the rest of the party, but still allow opportunities for role-playing and individual accomplishment. This is most important in tournaments, where the priest must have a well-defined role to stand out and be recognized. Practicing a "protector priest" is the best way to sharpen your skill and improve your role-playing.

A priest in an adventuring party can assume many roles. By focusing on one role, a priest character can be a more useful member of the group. The original cleric character was obviously intended as a healer and defender of the party, with spell lists dominated by curing and protection spells. This role of healer and protector has become rare in today's game. The tremendous number of new spells and the special powers of specialty priests have made the protector priest role unpopular. However, this seldom-recognized role is still used in tournaments, where specialty priests are rare and spell lists are often limited.

The Priest's Handbook describes the personality of the protector priest, and gives an example of priests who worship a healing deity. These examples are good reference material, but short on detail. A closer inspection of character choices can help you create a more convincing protector.

Choices, Choices

There are three important factors that determine the role of a priest in an adventuring group: deity or ethos, choice of weapons and armor, and choice of spells. No other class has as much variety among these factors.

Ye Gods!

Several roles for protector or healer priests come to mind just by examining a priest's deity. Your character may be willing to help others fight for a good cause, but abstains from combat for religious reasons, assuming the role of a battlefield medic. Such a character may serve a deity that abhors fighting, or one who prefers to act indirectly.

You could also assume the role of a negotiator or pacifist, trying to convince the party to talk rather than fight. This would be a good role for a priest serving a neutral deity who seeks to moderate rather than eradicate evil. Your character's deity may yield numerous variations on this theme.

Hack 'n' Slash No-Nos

The healer or protector role is hard to stick to in the heat of battle. It's tempting to join in and bash a few heads, especially when encouraged to do so by other members of the group. Selecting the right weapons will help you stay in your role.

Avoid high-damage weapons available to priests, like the footman's mace and footman's flail. Not only are they the weapons of a warrior, but they are often found as potent magical weapons, which are even more tempting to use offensively.

Clubs, staves, and hammers are ideal weapons for healer priests. These are effective for defense, but no one will mistake you for a combat-ready fighter (intelligent opponents might even leave you alone to deal with the "real" threat).

Missile weapons are also good choices, as they allow the character to participate in combat, but still disengage to help wounded allies.

Since you can't cast spells while engaged in combat, and can't help companions who may need quick healing, the combat rule for protector priests is: stay out! The selection of weapons may be a hard choice for protector priests, but choose your weapons according to character concept, not weapon damage charts.

Similar logic applies for the type of armor a protector or healer would wear. Consider avoiding the most protective armors such as plate, splint, or banded mails. Heavier armors limit mobility, preventing you from getting to where you need to be. Lighter armor also leaves space and stamina to carry more healing equipment or even a badly injured comrade if necessary!

How Do You Spell Relief?

More than weapons or armor, your choice of spells is essential. Unfortunately, in the day-to-day business of an adventuring protector priest, there are many offensive and miscellaneous spells to choose from. *Flame blade* or *summon insects* are useful spells, but perhaps out of line for a healer.

The most important choices facing a healer or protector priest are not so much which spells to choose, but how and when to use the spells available. The following spheres should be avoided: Astral, Charm, Combat, Elemental, and Summoning. Minor access can be given to: Animal, Creation, Plant, and Sun spheres. That leaves All, Divination, Guardian, Healing, Necromantic, Protection and Weather spheres as good choices for healing or protector priests. Not a short list at all!

Of course, this can and should be modified by your DM, depending on the type of priest you are playing. If you are using the *Tome of Magic* spells, Chaos and Law (one or the other!) should be avoided; Thought, Time, and War should be limited to minor access; and Travelers and Wards are excellent choices. Many tournaments do not allow *Tome of Magic* spells, so make sure you are familiar with the spells from the core rules. Spells specific to a particular game world such as DRAGONLANCE® or FORGOTTEN REALMS® settings are usually not allowed in tournaments.

Limiting your spell choices to these spheres does not make your character less useful. Mages don't have access to all spells, either. A good selection from the spells available will help to keep the role from becoming stale, and help keep you from slipping into combat spellcasting. Using protection spells to thwart enemies and protect friends, or casting other types of spells in creative ways should be the goal of such a priest. Of course, preventing the severe injury or death of the other

party members is also a primary concern.

Challenge yourself! See how well you can role-play such a character and contribute to a successful adventuring party. There are many divination spells and miscellaneous spells that can be very useful if you use your imagination and concentrate on what you have, not on what you are missing.

Practice in the Luxury of Your Own Home!

Playing such roles at home is good practice for tournaments. Most of the time, tournament priest characters are given short lists of spells emphasizing healing, protection, or divination. If you practice the use of such spells in your home campaign, it will be to your advantage when you play tournament priests.

Players typically grab for warrior and rogue characters first in most tournament scenarios as these often present the easiest opportunities for role-playing. A well-played priest can be just as effective for role-playing if you are prepared to heal, protect the party, and use divinations. In many recent tournaments, combat has become rare. This limits the usefulness of healing spells, but creative divinations can still put the priest character in the limelight.

Most of the time you can't control the armor and weapons available to your character in a tournament. Don't fight the character personality you get, but be prepared to put your own spin on the character. The most important choice for most tournaments is spells. Choose carefully from the list presented. Use what you know about the role of a protector priest to guide your choices, and take the opportunity to use the spells during the tournament adventure. If there are a couple of spells missing you would like to use, check with your DM. A favorite protection, curing, or divination spell may have been left off the spell list unintentionally, and using it may not upset the adventure. Ask, but don't object if the DM doesn't agree. The DM must be prepared to handle all spells cast during the adventure, and may not wish to allow unfamiliar spells. The goal here is to maximize your usefulness, and your role-playing, by the spells you choose and use. That doesn't mean you will need all of your spells; it's impossible to predict exactly what spells you might need before play starts. But be prepared to use what you are given. Role-players should remember that playing a role means taking part in the action, not just acting.

Casting Call

Here are just a few suggestions to get you started, a few of the best choices of spells for each level. Of course, healing spells and minor divinations are natural choices, so they aren't listed here.

1st level: *protection from evil* (–2 on AC, and protection from summoned creatures), *bless, detect poison.*
Protection from evil is probably the best of these, as it will protect an ally from damage.

2nd level: *aid* (extra hit points, +1 to hit), *barkskin, resist fire/cold, find traps.*
Unless you know you will be encountering fire or cold based attacks, *aid* is probably the best choice. It may prevent your allies from being damaged at all, and the bonus to hit is very effective.

3rd level: *dispel magic, negative plane protection, prayer* (+1/–1 on combat rolls for friends/enemies), *protection from fire.*
Prayer may just be the protector priest's best spell. Not only does it prevent damage to your party, but it adds to their combat effectiveness.

4th level: *control temperature, divination, protection from evil 10' radius, tongues.*
Divination is a great spell for giving you advance information about a dungeon, encounter, or situation, but it requires the DM's assistance to really work.

5th level: *commune with nature, rainbow, raise dead, true seeing*
The usefulness of *true seeing* cannot be denied. You can use this spell to detect magic items, invisible opponents, alignments, or concealed items or doors.

6th level: *anti-animal shell, find the path, speak with monsters*
The ability to talk to a monster may allow you to prevent an unnecessary combat, or learn vital information that can't be gained by other means. Then again, if you're lost, you can't beat *find the path.*

7th level: *control weather, restoration,*

symbol (persuasion or hopelessness) Once you get up to this level, all of the spells are useful, though *symbol* may be the best for dungeon situations.

Creative use of spells distinguishes a good spellcaster from an average one. Practice at home and then bask in the adulation of others for your mastery of the priestly role!

To help, here's a peek at some spells from the new *PLAYER'S OPTION™: Spells & Magic* release. Give a new prescription for the party's ills!

Protection from Chaos
(Abjuration)
Level: 1
Sphere: Law
Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 3 rounds/level
Casting Time: 4
Area of Effect: one creature
Saving Throw: None

Resembling the spell, *protection from evil*, this abjuration wards the creature touched from the attacks of minions of chaos. Chaotic creatures suffer a –2 penalty to attack rolls against the spell recipient, and the subject gains a +2 bonus to saving throws against spells or other attacks employed by chaotic creatures. Attempts to possess, dominate, or exercise other forms of mental control against the recipient are automatically blocked by this spell.

Protection from chaos also wards the recipient against contact with extraplanar creatures of chaotic origin, including tanar'ri, slaad, and eladrin. Unlike *protection from evil*, this spell does not necessarily guard against summoned or conjured creatures unless the creatures in question are chaotic in alignment. However, *protection from chaos* does protect the recipient from creatures influenced by confusion and chaos spells and effects. The natural or bodily attacks of such creatures automatically fail, as long as the recipient does not use the spell's power to trap, pin, or drive back the chaotic creatures in question. The spell ends if the recipient makes a melee attack against creatures that are prevented from attacking him by this spell.

The material component is a small ring of gold or lead. Note that this spell is not reversible.

Cure Moderate Wounds
(Necromancy) Reversible
Level: 2
Sphere: Healing
Range: Touch
Components: V, S
Duration: Permanent
Casting Time: 5
Area of Effect: Creature touched
Saving Throw: None

Somewhat less common than the well-known *cure light wounds* and *cure serious wounds*, this healing spell was created by a priest who found that his heroic companions required his skill at doctoring more than his advice and wisdom. By laying his hand on the subject's body, the priest can heal 1d10+1 points of damage. Noncorporeal, nonliving, or extraplanar creatures cannot be healed by this spell. The reverse of this spell, *cause moderate wounds*, requires the priest to successfully touch the victim and inflicts 1d10+1 points of damage.

Hold Poison
(Necromancy)
Level: 3
Sphere: Healing
Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 1 day/level
Casting Time: 1
Area of Effect: Creature touched
Saving Throw: None

This spell is an improved version of *slow poison*, with a duration measured in days rather than hours. When cast upon a victim who has been poisoned by any means, *hold poison* arrests the venom and prevents it from doing any additional damage to the victim. (In most cases, the spell must be cast during the poison's onset time in order to be effective.) Damage that has already been inflicted is not restored, but as long as the *hold poison* is in effect, the victim can be cured or healed of damage caused by poison by any normal means.

This spell can be used to indefinitely postpone the onset of a poison if the caster chooses to continue to cast it on the poisoned character before the previous hold poison wears off. However, each time a new hold poison is used to stop the venom's advance for another few days, there is a 2% cumulative chance that the spell fails and the poison runs its course. Evil priests have been known to deliberately poison a person and then use this spell to grant the victim a stay of death for a few days. This can be an extremely effective threat if the victim doesn't have access to a *neutralize poison* spell.

The material component is the priest's holy symbol and a bud of garlic that is crushed and smeared on the injury (or eaten if the poison was ingested).

Recitation
(Abjuration, Invocation/Evocation)
Level: 4
Sphere: Combat
Range: 0
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 1 round/level
Casting Time: 7
Area of Effect: 60′ radius
Saving Throw: None

By reciting a sacred passage or declaration, the priest invokes his deity's blessing upon himself and his allies, while causing confusion and weakness among his enemies. All creatures within the area of effect at the instant of the spell's completion are affected. Allies of the priest gain a +2 bonus to attack rolls and saving throws, or a +3 bonus if they are of the same faith (not just alignment) as the caster. Enemies suffer a –2 penalty to attack rolls and saving throws. After the recitation, the priest is free to take further actions during the spell's duration as he sees fit—he need not concentrate to maintain the spell. As a result, it is possible for the priest to cast a *prayer* spell, which increases the bonuses and penalties provided to +3 and –3 respectively. If another priest is using *chant* at the same time, then the bonuses and penalties given by it are also added to the total.

The material spell component is the priest's holy symbol and a copy of whatever text or scroll he holds sacred. Neither are consumed by the spell. ❑

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The Endless War

Tales of the Fifth Age™

by William W. Connors and Sue Weinlein-Cook

Illustrated by Terry Dykstra

6 SC, summer:

Half a decade after the Second Cataclysm had laid waste to our land, the Great Dragons from beyond the sea began to war among themselves. Across Krynn, men learned to live with the fact that this War of the Wyrms could spill over into their affairs at any time. The lives of men were for the taking, and we could only hope that the Great Dragons did not notice us in their battle for supremacy.

—From the Chronicles of Nathal, compiled in 31 SC

I still don't see her, rumbled Sirocco, Doral's blue dragon mount. She did her best to keep her voice low, the dragon equivalent of a whisper. It was still as loud as Doral's own shout would have been. Even the rush of the wind and the strokes of the beast's wings against the air did little to muffle it.

"Keep looking," hissed Doral, sweeping his gaze from left to right. "She must have come this way," he said, more to himself than the dragon. The Dark Knight lord fought the feeling of dread growing within him, chilling him despite his heavy flight jacket and armor. "I'm not returning without her."

But the General's orders—

"Takhisis take the General!" he roared. He had always had a quick temper. "I'm the one who sent Salina to talk alliance with that ogre clan. Since she never arrived, she must be here somewhere. I'm not going to leave her stranded!" Once again he scanned the ground, hoping for a sign.

Perhaps she was taken, offered Sirocco.

"Nonsense," Doral barked. "There hasn't been enemy activity anywhere near here." In his heart, however, he knew that Sirocco wasn't referring to their human enemies. She referred to a new foe, a greater menace whose existence Doral refused to accept.

His opinion on the matter was about to change.

As Doral turned his head to the east, looking across the coast of the New Sea and toward the wilds of Blodehelm beyond, he realized with a sinking feeling that he had made a tragic mistake. It was the first mistake he was to make on this ill-fated day.

Suddenly, with no warning or apparent cause, the blazing noonday sun went out.

He heard Sirocco's exclamation of alarm and responded to the warning instantly, struggling to control the fury welling up inside him. The warrior lord pulled sharply on the reins of the powerful blue dragon and issued an order. Sirocco reacted in the space of a heartbeat. Her left wing dipped sharply and trailed back the slightest bit. At the same time, the beast sculled air with her right and angled her great blue tail to provide a rudder.

Doral felt the sudden shift of motion and pressed his muscled legs against the dragon's flank, thinking with smug satisfaction that the maneuver would have thrown a less skillful rider from the saddle. This warrior, however, was no novice to the hardships of aerial combat. He and Salina had served under General Abrena for many years, and she had never accepted less than perfection from her officers.

Even as the thought of Salina brought to mind the image of the beautiful warrior's bright eyes and quick smile, Doral cursed himself. True, he was no raw recruit, but he had caught himself acting like one again. If he had not allowed himself to become so preoccupied with the search for Salina, he would have spotted the great winged form coming in from above and behind, diving out of the sun at him. Such an attack was the first thing that a young Knight learned to be wary of. Those who forgot this basic lesson seldom lived long enough to be reminded of their mistake.

"Name of the Abyss!" he spat.

The great black form was nearly upon him now. Doral leaned against Sirocco's rolling dive, waiting for the precise moment to strike. A second before the two reptilian flyers impacted, he spoke an order to his mount and reversed the pressure on the reins. Again, the dragon obeyed instantly. Her right wing collapsed

along the side of her blue-scaled body, and she gave a single mighty stroke with her left. Doral allowed his body to shift naturally with the dragon's powerful maneuvers, silently commending the effort of his longtime mount. Wind howled past the duo, filling Doral's ears with the sound of a gale.

It is Onysablet! she said, a slight hesitation in her echoing voice.

Ignoring the remark, Doral nudged his mount, perhaps too harshly, giving the signal for a maneuver they had practiced countless times. In a most unnatural fashion, the blue wyrm rolled before the great black form that had obscured the sun, exposing her belly—but bringing her talons and jaws into play.

Then his mount's words slowly sank in. Onysablet was the true name of the beast men called Sable! The thought flashed through Doral's mind as he clung to Sirocco's back. Man and dragon glimpsed their enemy clearly at the same moment. This black behemoth, easily thrice the size of Sirocco, filled the sky above them like the clouds of a looming storm. The obsidian black of her scales set off the ivory white of her teeth, each as long and sharp as a great sword. Her yellow-green eyes burned with all the hatred of her kind, and the sickly odor of swamps and decay filled the air around her. This was one of the Great Dragons from across the sea, and she was bearing down on them with the dizzying speed of a falling star.

Doral's thoughts raced as he recalled the stories tavern bards told of a new breed of dragon come to Ansalon in the years since the Second Cataclysm. Those idiotic Knights of Solamnia took the stories seriously, the Knights' spies had reported, and even the General never ventured too far east of their Nerakan headquarters, unwilling to risk the wrath of the so-called Red Marauder. But Doral had never swallowed the tales of terrible beasts that killed entire armies with a single fiery breath and hunted "lesser" dragons to absorb their life energy. A week ago, he had sent Salina's talon to make contact with an ogre clan—a mission that involved a flight from his wing's keep in the Khalkist Mountains directly over the purported lair of one such dragon. Doral had known that, but he had scoffed at his officer's concern.

Sirocco's warning still resounding in his head, Doral knew he had been a fool. This was Sable, the wyrm rumored to have claimed the eastern shores of the New Sea as her own. She was everything the bards' tales had promised—and then some. Even Doral's nerve bent under the fury of the diving monster.

Bent, but didn't break.

Now, Doral? As ever, the beast was too eager to strike. Doral held back the permission that his mount so longed for.

Then, when it seemed certain he had waited too long, Doral kicked his spurs once, crying out the command into the wind. The sapphire beast opened her gaping maw, revealing teeth each as long and keen as the warrior's own broad sword, but not half the size of Sable's. When the diving black dragon was less than twenty yards away, Sirocco exhaled sharply.

Doral closed his eyes, but the brief, blazing image froze itself onto his lids nonetheless. A spider's web of blue-white lightning leapt from Sirocco to bridge the distance between the dragons. A great clap of thunder slapped against warrior and dragon, but the veteran rider had braced himself for the savage concussion.

The black dragon screamed in agony, filling the air with a tremendous shriek that smothered the last echoes of thunder. Traces of blue fire ran along her scorched belly. The smell of searing flesh and dragon's blood found the warrior's nostrils.

We have drawn first blood! Sirocco roared jubilantly. This time, she made no effort to control the volume of her voice.

"But this battle is far from over," Doral muttered in reply. Tightening his grip on the reins, he released his right hand and grabbed for the gleaming lance secured to his saddle. The weapon came free cleanly and he quickly swung it around.

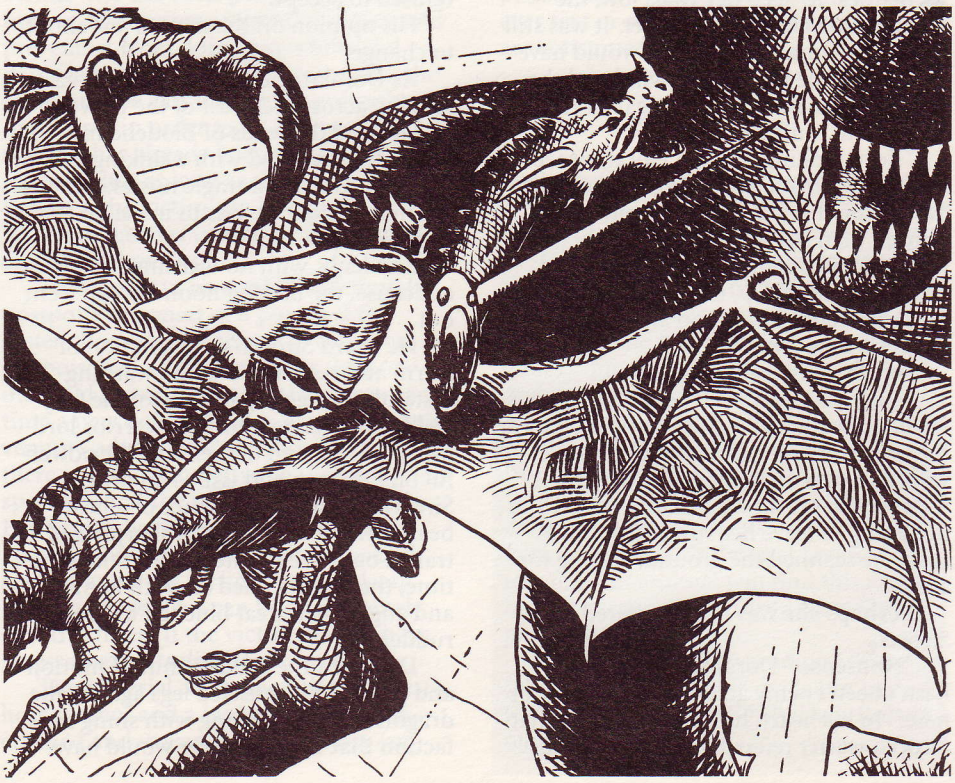
True, responded Sirocco, **and we have never before faced so massive a wyrm.**

It was then that Doral made his second mistake.

Realizing with a sinking feeling that the dragon was right, the warrior aimed the lance and thrust at his foe. However, he had underestimated the speed of Sable's dive, and the lance tip met its target too soon and at a poor angle. Even worse, the blow struck before Doral had managed to brace the weapon properly.

With a loud crack, the lance he had carried since his days at Storm's Keep snapped cleanly in half, then was torn from his grip. The wave of pain as his wrist shattered was lost to Doral in the sea of anger rising within him. Through his clumsiness, he had just destroyed his best means of fighting the black! Doral bellowed his rage. Rolling with the force of the impact, his dragon snarled in warning.

The rider refocused his vision on the attacking wyrm as Sirocco twisted to avoid the raking claws of the massive black dragon. He almost succeeded. Sirocco howled as one of the great talons pierced her flank and tore a gaping wound from the base of her neck to the middle of her ribs. Blood flowed freely and a shower of scales plummeted to the



sea below.

Now Doral's anger shifted to vengeful fury. Such a wound would not go unpunished! Craning his neck, Doral saw that the speed of Sable's dive had carried her past them. The blue dragon's rolling maneuver had brought them out from under the attacking wyrm and, with another great stroke of her sapphire wings, Sirocco plunged out of Sable's shadow and into the bright sunlight once more.

His own injury forgotten, the rider spurred Sirocco to greater speed, offering his dragon encouragement. But at the same time, a tiny voice he never acknowledged—the part of the man that knew fear—whispered that Doral should abandon all illusions of escaping this battle.

"Climb!" Doral shouted above the winds. "Get some distance between us!" He spurred his mount, leaning forward in the saddle. In response, Sirocco beat her wings savagely. Gradually, the snapping whitecaps that spread across the New Sea began to fall away into the salty haze that hung above the water.

After a few moments, Doral dared turn around again. Sable had spread her ebony wings wide, catching great masses of air to slow her descent. The warrior grinned. *She sees that our clever maneuvers have thwarted her!* he thought, pounding Sirocco's neck fondly. His grin faded, though, as he saw the gigantic wyrm pull out of her dive. Wings hammering the air, Sable swiveled her neck up and swept the sky for her prey.

Still climbing, Doral considered his options. He knew Sable would not quickly spot them—Sirocco's azure coloration made her blend in perfectly with the clear sky. Years of combat experience had left Doral hardened to the ebb and flow of battle. Any defeat, even one as major as this, might be turned to a victory, he reminded himself.

And today, victory lay in escape. The warrior knew he must carry what he had learned to the rest of the world. He grimaced. The twice-cursed Solamnics had been right! Much as he hated to admit it, this was an enemy that would call for an alliance between all men. If the rumors of other Great Dragons were true, and he now believed they were, dark times were ahead for every man, elf, or dwarf on Ansalon.

Far behind him, the thunderous roar of the black dragon boomed through the air. Out of the corner of his eye, Doral saw the great beast climbing toward them. He knew Sirocco was more agile than the behemoth, but she would never outrace her while injured.

The clouds? the blue dragon offered, her voice hoarse with pain.

Doral leveled his gaze upon the billowy form hugging the coastline. Once inside the clouds' concealing folds, Sirocco could elude the winged juggernaut. The rider's heart lifted. "The clouds!" he cried in sudden acknowledgment.

Sirocco redoubled her efforts, but her rider saw that the increased strain was making blood flow even faster from the wound in the dragon's flank. Doral uttered a quick prayer to powers that he knew weren't listening.

Then the warrior checked the enemy's position. "She's losing ground!" he shouted triumphantly—too soon. In a matter of heart-pounding minutes broken only by the sound of leathery wings whipping through cold air, the greater strength of the black dragon began to overcome the agility of the blue. The gap between the wyrms closed—slowly at first, then more quickly, as Sirocco's injury began to take its toll.

Doral cursed. The tenuous edges of the clouds seemed impossibly far away! He took a moment to flex the fingers of his right hand, but the fingers refused to move, and stabs of pain shot up his arm. The rider dropped his gaze to examine his broken wrist. Although the shattered bones had not pierced skin, he could tell the injury was severe. With a few loops and a deftly twisted knot, he tied the reins about the useless limb, lashing himself to his mount.

With his free hand, Doral drew forth the broad sword that had belonged to his grandfather, an officer in the Blue Dragonarmy during the War of the Lance. He pressed the flat of the blade to his lips and offered a word of honor to the memory of that great warrior.

"If ever you struck true, Torandor," he said to the weapon, "do so now."

The pursuing dragon roared again. This time, the beast was so close that the sound was a physical force that rolled across Doral, nearly deafening him. Even his specially padded helmet, designed to protect his hearing from the report of Sirocco's lightning breath, could not hold back the concussion.

Doral looked quickly over his shoulder. Sable loomed impossibly large—how could any living thing, even a dragon, get that big?—and drew nearer with every stroke of her great wings. The veteran rider had not felt dragonawe in years, but that fear consumed him now. In less than a minute, he knew, the black would be near enough to hit them with her deadly breath weapon. If this massive creature was like others of her kind—and Doral saw no reason to believe that she wasn't—he and Sirocco would be showered with a stream of the most caustic acid known to man. Neither of them, he knew, was likely to survive that.

And he would never see Salina again.

Even as that terrible thought crossed his mind, he saw Sable open her hideous mouth. A predatory gleam burned in the creature's snakelike eyes as she drew in her breath and prepared to attack.

Then, suddenly, Doral and Sirocco found themselves enveloped in an intangible white gauze.

The warrior let out a whoop of joy as Sirocco shot into the cloud. The blue dragon banked hard to the left, even as a torrent of oily black liquid leapt through the moist, white haze. Sirocco's scales hissed and melted away as the acid touched her wingtip.

The disgorging of acid into a cloud of water vapor filled the air with a sizzling, spitting sound. The bitter smell of bile made Doral retch, but he quickly fought down his revulsion and nudged Sirocco into a gradual climb.

"South…along the coast!" he shouted sickly. His mind whirled. Surely now that they were safely wrapped in the rolling white cloud, they should easily be able to escape the hunting wyrm. However, Doral based this assumption on tactics he had learned fighting dragons of similar size to his own mount.

This was the third mistake he would make in the battle.

As it turned out, it was also his last.

Another glance back showed Doral that Sable had surged into the veil of vapor after them, her massive wings creating great drafts within the mist. The warrior felt his heart turn to ice as he watched the torrents of air currents tear the cloud apart. Only seconds before, he and Sirocco had thought themselves safely shrouded from the hungry eyes of the dragon. Now they were exposed again.

Before he had even finished the thought, the powerful backdraft of the mammoth wings hammered the pair with the force of a hurricane. Doral cried out to his mount but, for all the dragon's strength, Sirocco was helpless before this gale.

End over end they rolled, Doral screaming in pain as the knotted reins pulled savagely at his broken wrist. For all that, however, Sirocco drowned out his cries with shrieks of agony at the wrench-

ing of her wounded flank. Disoriented and dazed, they began to tumble toward the churning surface of the ravenous sea below.

The warrior's head snapped back as his out-of-control dragon spun, allowing him to see Onysablet swing back on her path to pursue. Doral was barely conscious. The pain from his shattered wrist combined with his fury at his impotence clouded his vision with a red haze. Through this obscuring agony, he watched the great black beast surge toward them.

His pain gave him a measure of detachment. He observed as she brought her talons forward. As if a spectator, he watched her sweep her wings back. Absurdly, the image of a hawk swooping down on a tiny sparrow came to mind. The acrid smell of the black dragon rolled across him. The wicked claws would reach them in seconds.

Sirocco issued a growl of frustration and pain. Doral felt the valiant blue dragon struggle to pull out of her fall and halt their cataclysmic descent. Rage over his mount's suffering drove out the warrior's pain, infusing him with new strength. The passions that had ruled his life just might save it. With a cry of fury so vigorous that Sable might actually have heard it over the beating of her wings, Doral brought his sword around. As the keen edge of the magical weapon traced an arc through the bitter air, a shower of sparks trailed, hissing, from the blade.

As the gigantic claw began to close about Sirocco, the blade cut through the black dragon's scales and slashed the flesh beneath. A rippling wave of fire burst from the weapon, searing the wound and singeing the scales around it. For the second time, Doral smelled Sable's burning flesh, and he allowed himself a tired moment of pride. This time, however, he heard no outcry from the black dragon. Doral moaned as he realized Sable had never even noticed his final blow.

Doral! Loyal Sirocco offered her rider one last warning. But there was nothing the Knight could do.

Biting talons sheared the reins that bound Doral to his mount, sending him tumbling off the dragon. The passing moments seemed to slow to a crawl, leaving him hanging suspended in the summer sky to watch in horror the gruesome scene before him. His disbelieving eyes saw Onysablet tighten her grip about the bleeding blue dragon, then savagely crush the life out of his beloved Sirocco. The end came so quickly that his mount had made no utterance of pain—Doral doubted that she'd felt anything.

Impossibly, time continued to creep while Doral hung in the air—or was it the pain that made him him perceive it so? As the dismounted rider looked on, Sable did something both wondrous and terrible. Closing her gleaming eyes, she drew in a great breath. Tenuous streams of shimmering blue light slowly rose from Sirocco's limp body, then moved—as if drawn by the black dragon's force of will—to settle around Sable like an aura. After an endless moment, the last of the glow was absorbed into the black scales, and the aura was gone.

Twining her neck skyward and beating her wings with a triumphant roar, Sable opened her talons and released Sirocco. To his horror, Doral saw that the blue dragon's corpse was now desiccated, shriveled. "Great Queen," he murmured in awe, wanting to turn away from the sight. As the husk—all that remained of Sirocco—spun toward the sea below, the scales peeled away from it like dry leaves torn from their branches by an autumn storm. Flesh, now no more resilient than dry sand, streamed away to reveal yellowed bones. Doral could not suppress a gasp of sorrow as an uncharacteristic tear

rolled out onto his cheek. Could that have truly been his living, breathing Sirocco only moments before?

Looking down at the rolling waters of the New Sea spread out below him, the warrior realized the waves were drawing closer. He was falling now—the flow of time had returned to normal. Doral turned his head slightly to the right and saw the jagged edge of the coastline and the Khalkists rising beyond. It was a beautiful sight, he thought, the misty horizon of the sea to one side and the rolling hills of Blodehelm stretching off on the other. Even as the warrior felt the wind rushing past him and saw death below loom ever closer, he had to admire the grandeur of the land.

Odd, Doral thought. The fiery passions which ruled his life had fled now. None of the horrors he had just witnessed seemed to matter to him any more. Pride, anger, fear, awe, sorrow—all were gone. Death, it seemed, would be a good deal less exciting than he had always hoped.

The warrior angled his head upward to look again at the black dragon that had beaten him. She seemed just as large as she had been moments before, even though he had by now fallen thousands of feet away from her. The dragon was gazing down, watching Sirocco's ruined bones fall away from each other. When they hit the water they would make scattered, insignificant splashes. The wyrm seemed to take absolutely no notice of him.

As he fell, something caught the doomed warrior's eye. A shape appeared in the clouds behind Sable. At first, Doral wasn't sure what it was, but then he recognized it as a dragon. A glint of emerald in the summer sun told him the dragon was green...Salina was the only Knight of Takhisis to ride a green. Doral's heart leapt. Surely, this was she! Salina had seen his plight and was even now racing to his aid.

Then, the truth became clear. The arriving dragon was riderless. Larger than Sirocco, but still smaller than Sable, the emerald wyrm was not Brimstone, whom his beloved Salina had ridden.

There was no doubt in Doral's mind that the green dragon had made use of Sable's distraction with Sirocco to maneuver above the black behemoth. In the blink of an eye, the green had swept down upon Sable. With screams of challenge, the two serpents coiled around each other in ferocious battle. Doral roused himself to shout encouragement to the newcomer, knowing his words would never carry far enough for the green to hear.

Then, as the wyrms fought high above him, the Knight finally found what he had sought. Far below, on the shores of the New Sea, he saw Brimstone's desiccated remains. Clearly, he had met the same fate as Sirocco. There could be no doubt about the whereabouts of this dragon's rider. Her body was almost certainly hidden beneath the waves that drew closer to him with every passing second.

Doral turned his gaze back to the battling dragons. The languid passivity that had overcome him only moments before was gone, driven out by grief and anger. He screamed in rage, cursing the name of the great black dragon and calling upon the newly arrived beast to destroy her.

Long before it became clear which dragon would triumph, however, the churning waters of the New Sea embraced his shattered body. At last, he and Salina were reunited. ❑

The Druid Circle of Chauntea

The Bountiful Lady of the Vast Circle

by Claire M. Hoffman

Dedicated to The Great Mother, She Who Shapes All, the Druid Circle of Chauntea occupies a precarious position in the LIVING CITY™ campaign. The War has seemingly left the Circle untouched, though all is not necessarily well...

Location and Description

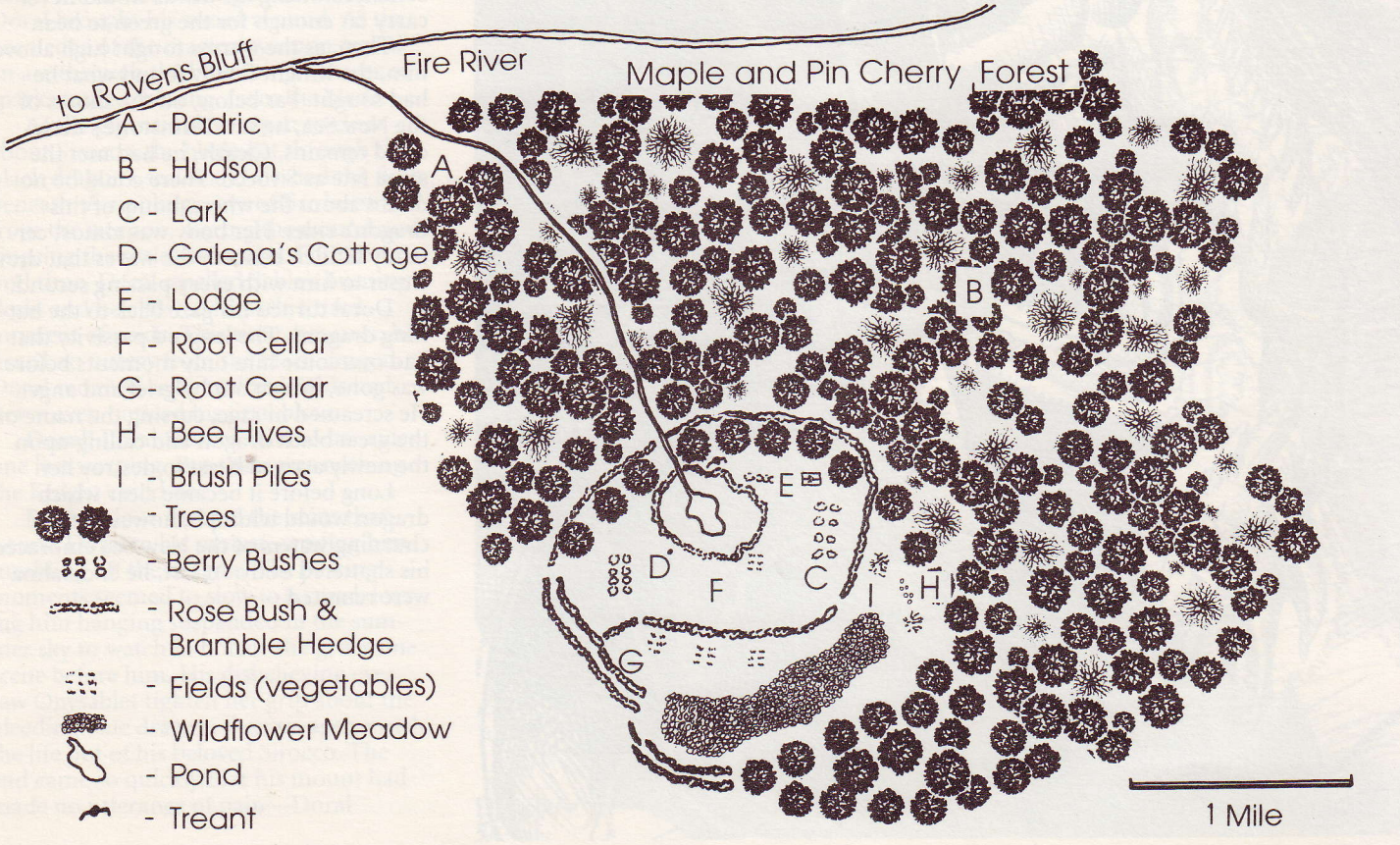
The Druid Circle of Chauntea is located about 30 miles east and slightly north of Ravens Bluff, about halfway between Ravens Bluff and Dragon Falls. The grove is about two miles south of Fire River, and the Sarbreenar mountains about 12 miles to the southeast.

Maple and pin cherry trees make up the northern portion of the grove. A spring-fed pond lies at its center; to the west and east of the pond lie long rows of bountiful berry bushes. Many of these bushes have benefited from the grove's magic, producing enchanted versions of their fruit once during their growing season. Apple, pear, cherry, walnut, and hickory trees compose the southern portion of the grove. At the southern edge is a meadow of wildflowers. Rose bushes and brambles surround the grove, awakened by the druids' power. These plants are now semi-intelligent and can attack as an Entangle spell. This enables them to protect themselves and the grove.

The clearing around the pond has a ground cover of clover and wild violets. Taro grows along the pond's northwest side. Goatsbeard grows on the northern side. There are four monoliths (or menheirs) near the edges of the clearing at the compass points. The northern stone is a Speaking Stone. Any druid in the grove can cause it to speak. The steward can ask the stone if intruders have been to the grove in his absence or a visiting druid can ask about the grove's history and keepers. The stone is limited to speaking for a total of three rounds per day. A large flat rock is close to the eastern edge of the pond and is used as an altar.

Some of the Circle members make their homes in small huts in and around the grove. However, except for the steward, druids are found there infrequently. All are present only for important ceremonies or meetings.

Four young treants have been convinced to make the woods their home. One of them is usually found standing just north of the pond.



History

This small druidic circle is the last remnant of a large organization of druid and ranger Chauntea worshipers who fell under attack by tribes of evil humanoids from the Sarbreenar mountains. The reason behind the attack is uncertain. Speculations include:

- the temples of Auril and Talos wanted a foothold in the mountains,
- a powerful foreigner organized the humanoids' attacks for his own reasons,
- humanoid hatred of druids, or
- some great power in the mountains wanted the druids' influence stopped.

The original Circle protected most of the Vast. The druids in the current Circle who were part of the original group are more inclined to look for the cause of the raids. Since 50 years is a long time by human standards though, new members in the Circle find other goals more important.

Issues

1. Although all druids of the Bountiful Lady of the Vast Circle support its general goals, each druid weighs the relative importance of the Circle's specific goals for himself and then acts accordingly.

2. The druids still maintain a watch (typically through the use of human and animal spies) on the humanoids to find out the current strengths, weaknesses, and location of the tribes, as well as the current condition of the lands.

3. The older druids are also more likely to seek the cause of the original raids and pursue revenge. The body of the steward of the original grove was never found. It is possible that he still lives and is plotting some cunning revenge on the humanoids. A druid can be very patient.

4. The nobles of the area have a history of disagreement with the Circle. The druids feel that balance of nature and man is more important than profit or pleasure hunting. Some of the nobles resent the interference of the druids. Both sides are quick to view each other with suspicion.

5. Some of the younger druids have discussed, though not as yet in the presence of the higher ranking druids, that the natural population growth of the humanoids and the lack of forage caused the raids. The current infrequency of the raids is used to support this theory, reasoning that now the humanoids have enough land to survive. The young druids think that since a balance has been achieved, there is no need to waste effort on reclaiming the land.

General goals of the Circle are:
To spread the teachings of Chauntea;
To promote good agricultural practices;
To protect the balance of wilderness habitat and the agricultural needs of the people; and
To seek out and defeat any plots of the followers of Auril and Talos.

GOALS OF THE CIRCLE

Specific goals of this Circle are:
To investigate the effects of the city and harbor enclosure upon the surrounding habitat;
To guard the plains and woodlands of the Vast from overdevelopment and exploitation;
To investigate rumors that priests of Auril and Talos are or were involved in the raids;
To reclaim and heal land and creatures damaged by the Time of Troubles; and
To reclaim the sacred grove that was once under this Circle's care.

6. The continuing prosperity of Ravens Bluff has led to an increase in trade and the extension of city influence further into the surrounding countryside. This expansion has led to an increased demand for wilderness clearing for farmland to support the growing population. The farmers have been tempted to experiment with plant hybrids to improve their profit. This type of conflict drives a wedge between the druids and clerics of Chauntea in Ravens Bluff.

7. Some druids of Chauntea are concerned about Melissa Elderan, Druid of Silvanus, both in regard to her grove just outside of Ravens Bluff and her political history. Druids of Chauntea and Silvanus usually cooperate. This cooperation helps insure the balance and avoids working at odds with each other. Some druids are wondering if Melissa means to start a Circle of Silvanus to surplant Chauntea's influence in the countryside around Ravens Bluff.

8. The hierophants make up a unique part of druidic order. They live as free agents, typically have a global perspective and agenda, and are notorious behind-the-scene manipulators. They use their long lifespans to weave subtle, decades-long schemes. Pheszeltan is the nearest known hierophant druid. A conflict such as the one between the Circle and the humanoid tribes is the type of situation that may gain his interest. He is not known to wander in the Vast, but who really knows where a hierophant druid might go or what he might do?

9. The rumored Shadow Circle may be involving itself in this area of the Vast. While their intentions are neutral, Shadow Circle members tend to promote chaos and evil. They use cruel or evil means as a way of pushing back civilization. The Shadow Circle sees the progress that Lord Mayor O'Kane has achieved in containing the squabbles of the lords and extending the protection of the city to the surrounding countryside as well as the encouragement of trade. These actions run counter to the Shadow Circle's goals. Of course, no one knows if the Shadow Circle actually exists or is merely a rumor started by the priests of Auril.

Specific Ceremonies For Chauntea in Ravens Bluff

Rituals or ceremonies would be held in honor of or on the following occasions in the LIVING CITY:

Festivals occur at the change of seasons and are celebrated by all those who follow Chauntea in the area. The festivals include rituals to bless fields and livestock and to give thanks for the bounty of the harvest depending on the season. The ritual is followed by a private ritual of celebration in the grove that lasts the rest of the day. The public activities continue on the following day and conclude in accordance to the season, e.g., in the spring,

visiting the fields to cast *plant growth.*

The **appeasement ceremony** is performed before wilderness is cleared. Usually the druid asked to perform the ceremony will cast a *commune with nature* spell before agreeing. If the druid is not powerful enough, he will seek the aid of a druid who can cast the spell.

Marriages are performed for worshippers of Chauntea. These weddings are simple ceremonies held in the grove or on the village green.

For typical **funerals,** the presiding druid blesses the departing spirit, the mourners remember the deceased in poem and song, and a wake follows.

The **Rite of Initiation** is only for those who would enter the druidic order and take oaths as specialty priests of Chauntea. This rite will only take place at a Moot or in a sacred grove on a holy day.

Rites of passage are offered in villages to mark the coming of age of young adults. The presiding druid will offer the blessing and guidance of Chauntea. The candidate is led into a nearby wilderness area to meditate and then find his way home. The druid will use his shapechange ability to watch and subtly guide the youth home if necessary.

Current Members of the Circle

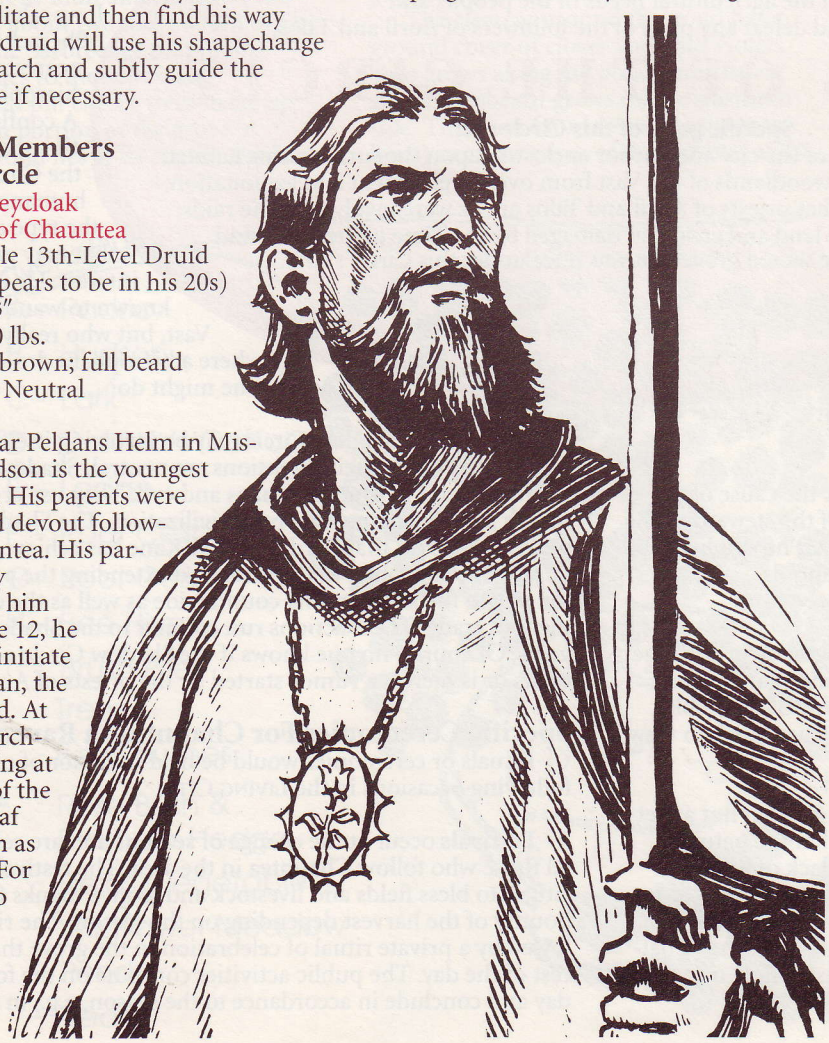
Hudson Greycloak
Archdruid of Chauntea
Human Male 13th-Level Druid
Age: 35 (appears to be in his 20s)
Height: 6′ 3″
Weight: 200 lbs.
Hair: Dark brown; full beard
Alignment: Neutral

Born near Peldans Helm in Mistledale, Hudson is the youngest of five sons. His parents were farmers and devout followers of Chauntea. His parents happily encouraged him when, at age 12, he became an initiate under Harlan, the village druid. At age 16, an archdruid residing at the Abbey of the Golden Sheaf took him on as an acolyte. For the next two years he grew stronger, studying and working in and around the abbey. At the end of that time, they moved on in different directions.

Hudson traveled with a small group of rangers and fighters for five years before heading to the Vast. When he reached Hlintar, he met Gosmani Hagaris, the druid who headed the local temple of Chauntea. From Gosmani he learned of the druid circle.

As the highest ranking druid in the Circle, Hudson is the leader. He travels the Vast, gathering a deep understanding of all aspects of its ecology. Hudson has a commanding presence and a zest for living that draws others to him. Drive, ambition, and skills enabled him to become an archdruid at a relatively young age.

Those who bring Hudson plans to increase the Circle's influence find him receptive, though he tries not to let his ambitions color his decision. He has delegated specific responsibilities and territories to the lower level druids in the Circle, keeping them too busy to challenge him.



Lark Thorncastle
Human Female 10th-Level Druid
Age: 65
Height: 5′ 4″
Weight: 130 lbs.
Hair: Iron gray
Alignment: Neutral

Lark's formative years were spent in the Dalelands. She joined a small group of rangers and druids to accompany a group of traders through the Border Forest, then through the Frozen Forest, and finally across the Great Glacier. After the trip, she settled in this region some 25 years ago.

While age has taken its toll on her strength and arthritis hinders her movements, Lark is still in good health and very active. She oversees the training of the initiates and the candidates for druidhood. She uses her spells and spies in order to watch for threats to the Circle. Every spring and again in late summer, she will take a walking tour of the area, visiting the farmers and villages, keeping in touch with the initiates and novices, setting them tasks, and judging their progress in their training. She also spends time tending the grove, working with its steward.

Lark is mentor to Galena and the two grove warders. Her initiates know her as a stern taskmaster, but the farmers know her as a warm, caring, stubborn individual. Honest and blunt, she is content with her life.

Vesper Robbinton
Human Female 9th-Level Druid
Age: 35
Height: 5′ 2″
Weight: 120 lbs.
Hair: Blond
Eyes: Gray
Alignment: Neutral

The oldest daughter of a local farmer, Vesper spent much of her youth with her shepherd uncle. He taught her herding and how to train herd dogs. When she was 23, she traveled to the Dales and worked with the druids in that area. She returned to the Vast five years ago. Her young son, Ian, was one of the main reasons she returned. By fostering him with her brother, Brian, she tries to give him a stable family life without neglecting her duties. Brian runs the family farm and sheep ranch.

Like the other druids in the Circle, she is responsible for overseeing initiate training. She is the Circle's animal expert; livestock owners often ask for advice or help.

Her territory is bounded on the north by Dark Hollow, on the west by Dragon Falls, and extends 30 miles south of the Fire River. She comes to the grove only for ceremonies and meetings.

Vesper is especially concerned with wildlife habitat. Currently she is trying to convince the Circle and village elders to require those who clear or enclose wildlands to set aside a portion of what they grow to feed the wildlife they have dispossessed. Vesper badgered her brother into allowing her to use one of his outbuildings for injured animals she finds.

Padric Coralian Ferndale
Half-elf Male 9th-Level Druid
Age: 90
Height: 5′ 8″
Weight: 145 lbs.
Hair: Silver
Eyes: Green
Alignment: Neutral

Padric grew up the Circle; his parents were both members. His father was a moon elf ranger, and his mother a half-elf druid of Chauntea. He became a druidic candidate early and spent 30 years working within the Vast learning to be a druid of Chauntea. After that, he was encouraged to spend some time traveling, which he did gladly. When he returned 15 years ago, he was saddened and horrified to find both his parents dead, slain by the humanoid tribes' attack.

Padric assists at the major ceremonies and conducts many of the minor ones. He actively gathers information for the circle using his skills and an information network, both human and otherwise. As one of the higher druids in the circle, he oversees a territory extending from the Fire River south to the foothills. It includes the areas immediately surrounding Ravens Bluff and Mossbridges, and east to the start of the Glorming Pass.

Padric's curiosity is strong. He thrives on change and challenge. Eager to learn himself, he enjoys teaching others, especially children, about the wonders of nature and Chauntea.

Padric feels guilty for not being with the Circle for the attacks. The original purpose for his network was to find the cause of the raids. Since then, his area of interest has widened; he looks for anything concerning the Circle or Chauntea. Although not obsessed, Padric is committed to recovering and renewing the lost grove.

Anton Hagarson
Human Male 8th-Level Druid
Age: 32
Height: 5′ 10″
Weight: 185 lbs.
Alignment: Neutral

Anton is originally from Tantras and has spent his entire life in the Vast. He does not talk about his past. It is known that he did spend a few years with a group of adventurers. He joined the Circle five years ago.

Anton has the duty of negotiating with individuals whom the Circle opposes as well as spreading ideas and plans that the Circle supports. He teaches children about Chauntea and looks for likely druid candidates. He oversees the area of the Highbank Forest and north to the area between Bambryn and Dark Hollow.

Anton studies diligently. He has tremendous patience and is a good negotiator. He looks for non-violent solutions; violence, as anything but a last resort, is to invite the influence of Auril or Talos.

Anton grows vegetables for the rabbits and provides a safe refuge in his cabin near the Highbank Forest in exchange for information. He takes great pleasure in their company as he has few close human friends.

Anton is very muscular and rarely seen without the company of one (or more) rabbits. He has an exceptional tenor singing voice.

Galena Rose Lancaster
Human Female 7th-Level Druid
Age: 23
Height: 5′ 5″
Weight: 155 lbs.
Hair: Mousey brown
Eyes: Gray
Alignment: Neutral

Galena was orphaned young and raised by her ranger uncle. She has always lived in forest or wilderness. Galena joined the druids of Chauntea at 15. She knows nothing of cities.

Galena has a seemingly boundless enthusiasm for her work. She intends to prove that you need only the blessings of Chauntea for improved crops and yield, not fancy hybrids. She is rarely silent and frequently talks to plants. Nurturing the grove is the focus of her life. She is wary when dealing with city folk. She asks Lark for advice when dealing with strangers who are not immediately threatening. She will call upon the powers of the grove to help her with those she feels threaten the grove.

As steward of the grove she tends to the flora and fauna and conducts daily rituals. She is also responsible for the planting of the fields attached to the grove. She has two warders (3rd-level druids) to assist with the fields and fruit trees.

Other Members of the Circle

Four 3rd-level druids (one assistant each for Vesper and Padric, two grove warders);
five 2nd-level druids (scattered);
seven 1st-level druids (scattered); and
two 4th-level rangers (brothers) who work with Padric to the south.

LIVING CITY™ Magic Item Certificates

We have processed many requests for magic item certificates, but people remain who need to undergo this process. As of August 8th at 6 AM, all magic items without "official" certificates will vanish out of the campaign, never to be allowed again. Official certificates have the Raven logo on them. If you have certificates with the Raven logo, you are safe; these do not need to be replaced. If you have certificates without the Raven logo, or items without certificates, stop reading right now, put the magazine down, and prepare your request to send to Network HQ. Here is the simple process:

a. Compile a list of all items you do not have Raven logo certificates for, and make copies of these certificates; include the module where you got the item and the convention where you played—a chart format makes it easier to read;

b. Write your name, address, membership number, and character's name at the top of the list;

c. Send the list with payment (50 cents per item) to Network HQ at the address on the table of contents.

You will get your official certificates as soon as we can process them.

Certificates will not be made for anyone at GEN CON® Game Fair. You must have them before then.

Finder Wyvernspur

by Eric L. Boyd & Kate Novak

Finder Wyvernspur
(The Nameless Bard)
Demipower of Arborea and Ysgard, CN
Portfolio: The cycle of life (rot to rebirth), transformation of art, saurials
Aliases: None
Domain Name: Probably Olympus or Ysgard/None as of yet
Superior: None
Allies: Tymora, Selûne
Foes: Moander (dead)
Symbol: White harp on a gray circle
Wor. Align.: NG, CG, N, CN

Finder Wyvernspur (FINE-der WIV-urn-sper) was a mortal who recently ascended to godhood by slaying the evil god Moander on its home plane in the Abyss. Finder was a founding member of the Harpers in the Realms, but was later judged to have betrayed the ideals of that secretive organization when his overweening pride resulted in the death of one apprentice and the suicide of another. Finder was imprisoned in the Citadel of White Exile until he was freed by the sellsword, Alias, and her companions. Finder was later instrumental in the destruction of Moander and his minions, thereby freeing the saurials who had been enslaved by the Darkbringer in the Lost Vale. Finder bequeathed his Harper's pin to Olive Ruskettle, the first true halfling bard. Olive and Alias, his daughter and creation, were chiefly responsible for helping Finder begin to redeem his soul.

Finder has a dual aspect as a divine being. Rot and corruption (a remainder of Moander's portfolio) represent Finder's excessive pride, arrogance, and vanity. Rebirth and renewal from rot and corruption symbolize Finder's transformation to hero, savior, and god.

Finder is a new god and has yet to settle on a home, but it is rumored he has been seen in Arborea and Sylvania in the company of Tymora and once in Ysgard entertaining Selûne. Selûne, a patroness of both the Wyvernspur family and the Harpers, has long enjoyed Finder's music, especially songs he has written in her honor. Tymora has been the bard's patroness in recent years, most notably in appealing to Ao to allow Finder to absorb Moander's power rather than being destroyed by it. It is believed that Lady Luck aided Finder in part as revenge for Moander's corruption of Tyche centuries ago. Finder is not yet comfortable in the company of gods, unnerved by finding himself a small fish in a big pond.

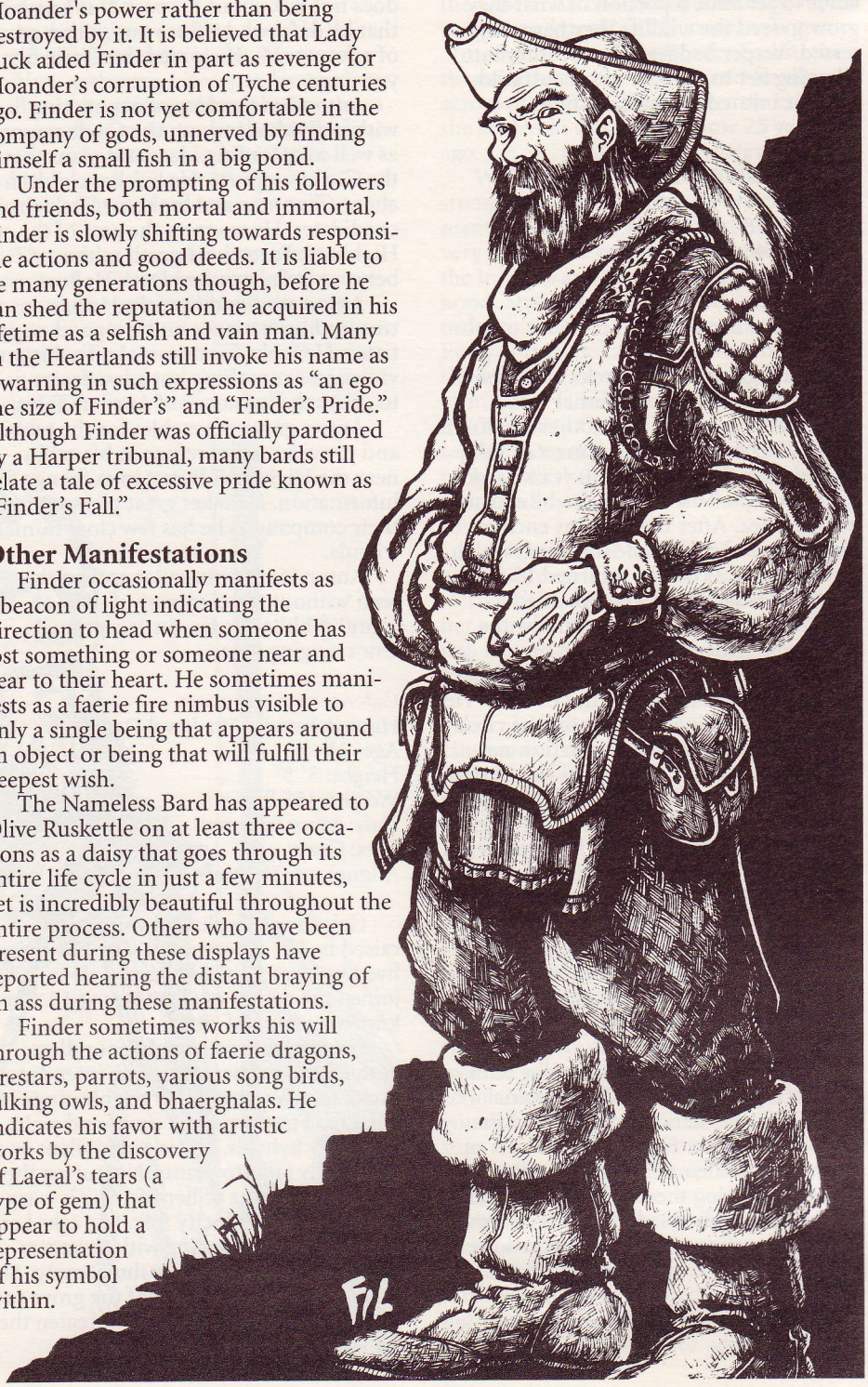
Under the prompting of his followers and friends, both mortal and immortal, Finder is slowly shifting towards responsible actions and good deeds. It is liable to be many generations though, before he can shed the reputation he acquired in his lifetime as a selfish and vain man. Many in the Heartlands still invoke his name as a warning in such expressions as "an ego the size of Finder's" and "Finder's Pride." Although Finder was officially pardoned by a Harper tribunal, many bards still relate a tale of excessive pride known as "Finder's Fall."

Other Manifestations

Finder occasionally manifests as a beacon of light indicating the direction to head when someone has lost something or someone near and dear to their heart. He sometimes manifests as a faerie fire nimbus visible to only a single being that appears around an object or being that will fulfill their deepest wish.

The Nameless Bard has appeared to Olive Ruskettle on at least three occasions as a daisy that goes through its entire life cycle in just a few minutes, yet is incredibly beautiful throughout the entire process. Others who have been present during these displays have reported hearing the distant braying of an ass during these manifestations.

Finder sometimes works his will through the actions of faerie dragons, firestars, parrots, various song birds, talking owls, and bhaerghalas. He indicates his favor with artistic works by the discovery of Laeral's tears (a type of gem) that appear to hold a representation of his symbol within.



The Church

Clergy: Specialty priests, bards
Clergy's Align.: NG, CG, N, CN
Turn Undead: SP: Yes, B: No
Cmnd. Undead: SP: No, B: No

All specialty priests of Finder Wyvernspur receive religion (Faerûnian) as a bonus nonweapon proficiency.

Finder is slowly establishing his power, with few true worshippers in the Realms. His followers currently are a few young bards and artists, particularly arrogant prodigies, some of the saurials of the Lost Vale, a few music aficionados, and Olive Ruskettle, the halfling bard and Harper.

Finder often helps new talent find a good venue—a tavern willing to let a young bard perform, a shop to carry a struggling sculptor's work, a festhall needing a new dancer—then he will leave the artist to sink or swim. For most artists, such opportunities are more than enough to earn their gratitude. Many younger bards and artists have begun to privately invoke Finder's name as they struggle to make a name for themselves in the Realms. This practice has been strongly discouraged by the clergy of Oghma and Milil who see worship of Finder as a threat to their gods' power. (It is unclear how Oghma and Milil view Finder's ascension to godhood.)

Finder is also venerated among many saurials of the Lost Vale as their patron and protector. He is respected by those who do not share the alignments of his worshippers. He does keep an eye on the Lost Vale, even when his daughter, Alias, is not residing within, in gratitude to the saurial Dragonbait, who has served as her protector since her birth.

Those who knew Finder, save for Olive and Alias, are generally amused by his godhood, noting that when he was mortal, Finder always acted as if he thought he was a god. Generally such persons are friendly to Finderites, seeing them as entertaining and useful. Sworn enemies of the Harpers will treat the bard's followers with hostility, as will ruling members of rigid societies who come into conflict with their dogma of change and individual freedom of expression and choice.

Finder's actual clergy is currently limited to a saurial priestess in the Lost Vale, CopperBloom, and a rebellious young bard from Berdusk, known as "The Rebel Bard," who presently adventures in the Heartlands. Finder's clergy is likely to expand rapidly during the next few decades, and be evenly split between specialty priests and bards.

Finder's divinity is new enough that his followers have not yet settled on a standard type of temple. Common themes will likely include large performance areas with good acoustics.

Dogma: Finder's followers have taken to heart the lessons it took Finder all his life to discover. Art which is forced to remain immutable is a sign of stagnation and spiritual rot. To thrive, people must be willing to change and transform their art so they can be renewed by it. Finderites also recognize the power of art to influence people and politics. Although that should not be its sole use, art can be used to keep people free from social or political tyranny. Finderites do not recognize a difference between secular and religious art—all art is pleasing to Finder. Artistic expression should also be encouraged in all—children and adult, amateur and professional. While those who have mastered disciplines of expression are to be admired, Finderites also recognize the importance of natural talents.

Day-to-Day Activities: Clergy and followers are expected to create or perform. Donations of gold are not refused, but artistic endeavors are considered a more proper form of tithe. Consequently, while the church is not wealthy, it holds a burgeoning amount of art some of which, no doubt, will one day be priceless.

Holy Days and Important Ceremonies: Humans and saurials celebrate the 20th of Leafall, the day Finder destroyed Moander's avatar in the Realms and then the evil god's true form in the Abyss. Saurials are most grateful for their emancipation from Moander's enslavement and stress this in their prayers. Humans, while recognizing Moander's death as a good thing, tend to think of this day as the occasion when Finder realized even his own music could be improved by change. The day is celebrated with music, dancing, plays, and the unveiling of more static art forms. Some of Finder's songs are sung, often with varying arrangements.

Major Centers of Worship: Finderites of the Lost Vale have claimed the Singing Cave as their temple. The caverns within have wonderful acoustics and the passages are lined with art donated by followers. The Rebel Bard has done his part to see that several shrines are consecrated to Finder throughout the western Heartlands. Some are open areas of great beauty or geographic anomalies perfect for performing. Others are small open-sided shelters featuring statuary or paintings for all to see. Sometimes visitors are invited to add to or change a work of art; the Rebel Bard stresses interactive and participatory art.

Affiliated Orders: The Shrine Keepers are pockets of followers who live near a shrine established by the Rebel Bard. They tend the shrines, preparing them for performances, tidying them, and seeing that they are not defiled. Some consider the saurial soul singers an order of Finderites, but, while they are trained by his priestess, not all of them are followers of the Nameless Bard.

Priestly Vestments: CopperBloom and the Rebel Bard both dress as does Finder, in simple but elegant clothing, believing it better not to distract the audience from their performances. Future clergy members might dress in more elaborate costume should their particular talents call for a showier look.

Adventuring Garb: On the road, both priestess and bard dress in practical traveling clothes. CopperBloom wears no armor, relying on the protection of her scales. The Rebel Bard wears leather armor. Priests of Finder dislike sacrificing their grace and dexterity to plate armor, though they go armed as they choose.

Specialty Priests (Finders)

Requirements: Wisdom 11, Charisma 15
Prime Req.: Wisdom, Charisma
Alignment: CN, CG
Weapons: Any
Armor: All armor types up to and including chain mail; no shield
Major Spheres: All, charm, divination, elemental, travelers
Minor Spheres: Creation, healing
Magical Items: Same as clerics and bards (not items restricted to wizards only)
Req. Profs: One or more in any art form
Bonus Profs: Direction sense, singing, musical instrument (harp)

Granted Powers

- Saurials may be finders.

Finders can cast the following spells once per day at appropriate levels:

- 2nd level: *charm person* (as the 1st-level wizard spell);
- 3rd level: *ghost pipes* (as the 3rd-level wizard spell);
- 4th level: *dispel silence* (as the 3rd-level wizard spell, casting time (CT) of 6);
- 5th level: *slow rot* (as the 3rd-level priest spell);
- 7th level: *find the path* (as the 6th-level priest spell);
- 9th level: *Melisander's harp* (as the 5th-level wizard spell with a CT of 8); and
- 11th level: *starharp* (as the 6th-level wizard spell, CT of 9).

Stand Up and Be Counted!

In This Election Year, Don't Forget to Vote for

The GAMERS' CHOICE™ Awards of 1996

The RPGA® Network, a worldwide organization of gamers known for its continuing support of excellence in gaming, takes pride in sponsoring the 1996 GAMERS' CHOICE™ Awards.

If you enjoy playing games of any kind, here is your chance to make a difference. Participate in this year's voting for the best games of 1996. This is your opportunity to let the game manufacturers know what you think about their products. You need not be a Network member to vote. These awards are intended to represent the voice of the consumer.

The RPGA Network reserves the right to disqualify any ballot that fails to meet balloting rules. The Network will present the awards on August 11, 1996 during the GEN CON® 29 Game Fair awards ceremony, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

You may vote for one product in each category. You need not vote in all categories. Only NEW products or MAJOR REVISIONS of existing products (excluding magazines, which are considered separately) published during 1995 are eligible for the 1996 GAMERS' CHOICE Awards. Reprints and re-releases do not qualify unless the product has undergone a major revision. If you are not sure whether a product qualifies, check the copyright date printed on the product. A 1995 copyright date is not a guarantee of eligibility, but it is an indication.

On your ballot, please indicate the name of the manufacturer of each product you vote for. Manufacturer's name is not required to validate the ballot, but it is helpful in processing.

Balloting Rules: Please Read Carefully

1. If a ballot violates any of these rules, it will be disqualified.
2. You must use this ballot or a photocopy of this ballot.
3. Your name and address must appear on the ballot.
4. You may only vote once! If you send more than one ballot, all your ballots will be disqualified.
5. VOTE for ONE product in each category. You may not add categories, but your comments will be considered for next year's balloting.

CATEGORIES:

1. Best Family Game: This may include any mass market board, dice, card, video, or abstract strategy game.

2. Role Playing Games & Accessories: This category has been subdivided by genre: (Solitaire gaming books also may be considered in their appropriate theme.)

Fantasy: This genre includes games in which magical or mythological creatures and worlds predominate. Awards in this genre have been further subdivided into game rules, playing aids & rule supplements, and role playing adventures.

Science Fiction: This genre includes science fiction futuristic themes, including time travel, outer space, future worlds, aliens & mutants, etc.

Others: This genre includes games that do not fall under the above categories, including high adventure, espionage, pulp hero, superhero, and humorous themes.

3. Hobby Games: This includes strategic battle and diplomacy games. This can include wargames, card games, and other types of games not included in another category. Subcategories of hobby games include Miniature Figures used by strategy gaming enthusiasts or by role-playing gamers.

4. Computer Games: This includes gaming software specifically designed for home computers. There are two awards, one for adventure games (including computerized role-playing games), strategic games (including computer versions of hobby games), and simulator programs. The second award is for play-by-mail computer assisted games in which turns are processed through the mail.

5. Gaming Magazines: To qualify, a gaming magazine must have a subscription base in excess of 1,000 copies.

6. RPGA Network Tournament: This category includes single- and multi-round tournaments for a variety of role-playing game systems run at conventions during 1996.

7. Network Gamemaster: This recognizes the Network's best member gamemaster, based on skill, knowledge, and ability to make games fun.

GAMERS' CHOICE™ AWARDS of 1996

Official Ballot:

1. Best Family Game:
Product: _____
Manufacturer: _____

2. Best Fantasy Role Playing Game:
Product: _____
Manufacturer: _____

3. Best Fantasy Adventure:
Product: _____
Manufacturer: _____

4. Best Fantasy Accessory/Supplement:
Product: _____
Manufacturer: _____

5. Best Science Fiction Role Playing Game:
Product: _____
Manufacturer: _____

6. Best Other Role Playing Game:
Product: _____
Manufacturer: _____

7. Best Historical Strategy Game:
Product: _____
Manufacturer: _____

8. Best Science Fiction/Fantasy Strategy Game:
Product: _____
Manufacturer: _____

9. Best Card Game:
Product: _____
Manufacturer: _____

10. Best Card Game Supplement:
Product: _____
Manufacturer: _____

11. Best Miniatures Line:
Product: _____
Manufacturer: _____

12. Best Computer Game:
Product: _____
Manufacturer: _____

13. Best Play-By-Mail Game:
Product: _____
Manufacturer: _____

14. Best Gaming Magazine:
Product: _____
Manufacturer: _____

15. Best RPGA Network Tournament:
Title: _____
Author(s): _____

16. Best RPGA Network Gamemaster:
Product: _____
Manufacturer: _____

The following information is required for ballot validation.
Name: _____
Address: _____
City/State/Zip: _____

Mail ballot by June 30, 1996 to: GAMERS' CHOICE™ Awards, RPGA® Network Headquarters.
201 Sheridan Springs Road, Lake Geneva, WI 53147

A World of Your Own

New World Opening—No Humans Allowed! Part 1

by Roger E. Moore

As in the last few issues, fictitious Dungeon Masters this month jump into creating original game worlds for the AD&D® game. This time, however, our DMs will make one important change in the nature of things, in their quests for the ultimate Least Boring Campaign: human player characters are *not allowed.*

Why bother? Aren't all AD&D campaigns supposed to be "humanocentric"? This old dictum from the original AD&D *DUNGEON MASTER® Guide* has become less critical in recent years, as a flood tide of new character races has swept over the fantasy landscape. With resources at hand like *The Complete Book of Humanoids* and the COUNCIL OF WYRMS™ boxed set (not to mention the peculiar nonhumans in the DARK SUN® and SPELLJAMMER® settings), the PC options are vast, and many players take them.

Playing in a nonhuman-PC campaign has an advantage, too, in that it gives the campaign a special spin. Removing humans entirely throws the campaign onto the shoulders of races with strong, built-in role-playing hooks and assorted special powers and abilities. Players who regard human PCs as too "vanilla" (i.e., lacking in personality, cultural identity, uniqueness, etc.) will readily seize on nonhuman campaigns. Humans, if they exist as NPCs, might be villains who seek to destroy or enslave other races. With their enormous flexibility and unlimited level progression, humans would make terrible—and natural—foes. Can other races put aside their differences to unite against this worst of all possible enemies?

There are many difficulties involved in putting such campaigns together, of course, not the least of which is the question of how many gamers will be attracted to a campaign in which nonhuman races dominate all activities. Humans might not even exist in such campaigns, having never appeared in the region or having died out or left for other lands ages ago. Would such a concept work in gaming? We'll give it a shot.

Where No Human Has Gone Before

Nonhuman kingdoms and worlds are not uncommon in the AD&D game. A campaign made up only of high-elf player characters, for instance, could be run in any number of places: the *World of GREYHAWK®* setting's kingdom of Celene, the FORGOTTEN REALMS® setting's Evermeet Island, the DRAGONLANCE® campaign's elven lands of Southern Ergoth, the BIRTHRIGHT™ campaign's domains of Tuarhievel or the Sielwode, the MYSTARA® setting's nation of—oops, no, skip that, Alfheim's been destroyed. Sorry. Anyway, there's all that and about a dozen other places besides, including some places detailed earlier in this column. If you are using drow or shadow elves, the possibilities expand even further. At least you can use what's left of Alfheim—I mean, Aengmor.

For the sake of strangeness (and let's face it, some days we all like a little strangeness in our fantasy), let's skip over the common demihumans like elves, dwarves, halflings, etc. We'll have some DMs pick more unusual nonhumans for their campaigns, and we'll take a quick look at how they set things up.

Minotaurs

Paul's friends are hack-and-slash role-players. While searching for a short-term campaign that will keep the group occupied while the regular DM is out of town for a couple of months, Paul (the new DM) looks over a copy of the *Time of the Dragon* boxed set. He is intrigued by the small continent of Taladas from the DRAGONLANCE setting, on which lies the Imperial League of Minotaurs. Many minotaurs are chaotic evil in alignment, but Paul confers with the players, wins their approval, and puts together an aggressive but non-evil campaign using minotaur explorers and adventurers as PCs. Source material he uses includes the *Time of the Dragon* and *Tales of the Lance* boxed sets, *DRAGONLANCE Adventures* converted to AD&D 2nd Edition rules), and (of course) the *Taladas: The Minotaurs* accessory, with various "Complete Handbooks" for kits and proficiencies, the *ENCYCLOPEDIA MAGICA™* volumes for treasure, the DRAGONLANCE *MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM®* appendix for monsters, *PLAYER'S OPTION™: Combat & Tactics* for—well, combat and tactics, and so on.

Minotaur fighters, priests, mages, and rangers are allowed as PCs, starting from 1st level and most having military backgrounds. (Proficiencies cure the lack of thieves and scouts in the party.) Taladas minotaurs are not like those detailed in the *Complete Book of Humanoids*, but Paul uses that book for creating a few non-minotaur NPCs. Given the Imperial League's Roman look, he borrows cultural bits from books on the Roman Empire and the sourcebook HR5 *The Glory of Rome.* The more "Roman" a minotaur

looks, the better, though one minotaur PC from northeastern Ansalon might be allowed.

Paul prefers to keep the campaign centered around Taladas, ignoring Ansalon for the most part. He doesn't plan to use much SPELLJAMMER material, though he checks references to the League and Taladas in *The Complete Spacefarer's Handbook* and the *War Captain's Companion* boxed set, and he will have spelljammers land or take off from Kristophan as background color. No PLANESCAPE™ or RAVENLOFT® adventures are planned, either. (Paul wants his group to stay "grounded.") However, he elects to have the PCs work away from the League (or at least any part but Kristophan) until he become more confident in running the homelands.

The *Otherlands* accessory thus comes in handy for adventuring possibilities, and Paul sets up his first series of adventures to be a secret, commando-style exploration of the islands of the Spine of Taladas, with an eye toward their conquest. Paul decides that a long-simmering conflict between the Imperial League and the Sea Witch, Sagarassi (who lives on an island south of the Spine) is coming to a boil. League ships go where they will, and other races don't always like being spied on. An exploration ship of the League was attacked and sunk by koalinths working for the Sea Witch when the ship scouted the Sea Witch's home island; as a result, the League has secretly voted to make the region safe in the only way it knows how: total conquest. The PCs are the first wave of this policy to establish bases for the Imperial navy throughout the Spine, then move on the Sea Witch and destroy her and her followers (and everyone else who gets in the way).

The PCs are to scout the islands out, pretending if caught to be confused or stupid explorers (or possibly fugitives from League justice). The establishment of a forward base in the Spine for spying on local activities is also hoped for. This will keep the adventures tense and active for weeks to come, as well as limiting the campaign's scope to keep it from wandering and losing its focus. Possible foes include Mischta and Nzunta ogres, Bolandi, jungle and sea monsters, dragons, pirates, lacedons, koalinths, mermen, and Dargonesti elves. (The minotaurs of the League make no distinction between different undersea races, viewing them all as potential threats.) The dragons could easily be the nastiest foes, as one island in the Spine is a hatchery for good dragons on Krynn! (Perhaps negotiation would be better than fighting.)

About the time that Paul is ready to start his campaign, *Dragons of Summer Flame* comes out and gives him a nasty turn. He meant to start the campaign in 352 AC, following information given in "The Chronology of Krynn," in DRAGON® magazine issue #224 (pages 72–76); just as the War of the Lance ended, the Imperial League begins its war of conquest. If the campaign catches on and runs beyond its expected expiration date (the other DM might even join!), Paul doesn't want the campaign to end in 30 game years when all gods and magic go away—and the DRAGONLANCE campaign ceases to become an AD&D setting! Besides, everyone in the group has bought a copy of the book, so there aren't any secrets left regarding the future. The Knights of Takhisis conquer all. Who'll play in the campaign if their PCs' deeds are ultimately regarded as futile?

While glumly flipping through a friend's copy of *Chronomancer*, Paul suddenly notes the existence of alternate realities of Krynn, on page 87 in that book. If he changed a critical event at a temporal node, he'd create a new and perfectly legitimate DRAGONLANCE campaign! Stunned at the possibilities, Paul sneaks a peak at a bookstore copy of *The Second Generation* and finds his node. The capture of Ariakan (page 292 in the hardbound version of the book) now ends in the youth's death in combat with the Knights of Solamnia. The Knights of Takhisis are never formed. The long-

duration play option is saved.

Paul sighs with relief and goes home to get his campaign ready. The players won't know right away that things have changed, but the news of Ariakan's death will soon arrive in Taladas with the news of the war's end, and the surprised players can draw their own conclusions. Who knows what the future now holds in store?

Dragons

Lisa runs a straightforward *World of Greyhawk* campaign in which the group is just now wrapping up another grand adventure. With the *Mace of Cuthbert* safely recovered and Iuz's invasion force destroyed outside Radigast City, the tired players are ripe for a short-lived, change-of-pace campaign. "Let's do something different," they say in unison. "Sure," she says, without the slightest idea of what she will offer then next.

When everyone has left to go home from the game, Lisa looks over the piles of AD&D game supplies in her hall closet. Nothing seems to click. At random, she pulls out the Council of Wyrms box, which she bought as a curio but never played. The rule book is straightforward enough. Could she run dragon PCs around in the Flanaess? Probably not without screwing up the regular campaign; it wouldn't do to mix dragons with regular PCs. The campaign will probably have to be on the Io's Blood Islands; Lisa grimaces, thinking of the time it will take to familiarize herself with the world. She puts the box aside for further examination and takes a last look through the piles—and spots her equally unused copy of SJR6 *Greyspace*.

Lisa hates anything having to do with the Spelljammer campaign. She hates science fantasy, spelljammers, crystal spheres, the whole schtick. She bought *Greyspace* out of curiosity, read it once, and put it away. But something now clicks in her mind. Wasn't there a planet in Greyspace populated only by dragons?

A minute of looking supplies the answer: Edill, a gigantic airworld, is filled with dragons. Most are metallics, with other types here and there; silver dragons predominate. Silvers make good characters, Lisa remembers from the Council of Wyrms rules, though other metallic or gem colors could be used. Could she use the Council of Wyrms rules to run an all-dragon campaign on this world? A quick glance at the booklet shows no reason why not. Kindred (demihumans) and half-dragons would not exist, but the loss would be no trouble. There's no point in running hatchlings, given that this won't be a long-term campaign, so PCs can start at 6th level and stay there for the whole adventure. The higher levels will give the PCs the ability to take lots of damage and make their plans more flexible. Lisa nods, absorbed. This could work.

What about adventures? Maybe the PCs could explore some of the flying bodies of earth and rock in Edill's atmosphere. Maybe one has a gigantic dungeon, like Hammerim's deathtrap dungeon in Book Three of the Council of Wyrms boxed set. Who would build such a thing? Regular PCs often face liches and mad wizards; the PCs could find and explore a mile-long rock in which an undead red-dragon wizard has built its laboratory and lair. Maybe the undead dragon has great spells and has collected dangerous monsters and traps from its explorations of other planes, or perhaps it has been trading with the humanoids said to be helping the red dragons of Edill in *Greyspace*. Lisa is getting excited.

With the boxed set, Lisa can also design some special treasures in the undead dragon's home, magical things the PC dragons can use and keep: giant amulets, rings, necklaces, gems, staves, etc. Lisa checks Book Two of the boxed set and finds more treasure possibilities on pages 49–50. Spellcasting dragons can be wizards or priests; the rest can be warriors. *Greyspace* has its own local draconic deity, Rais, who introduces spells from the *Tome of Magic* to the campaign. Most dragons of Edill are philosophers, but the PCs could be bored youths who want more adventure in their lives. Maybe their elders sent them off to learn wisdom, and instead they spotted this orbiting rock and decided to examine it.

Best of all, Lisa thinks, she won't be bothered with spelljamming details. The dragons will just fly up to the orbiting rock and start exploring like in a regular adventure. They'll fight evil monsters that can dish out plenty of damage, collect some magical wealth, and, with luck, defeat the monstrous undead dragon at the dungeon's end. It will be a challenge to design a dungeon with corridors 50 feet wide—but Lisa is ready to give it a shot. She will study the Hammerim dungeon for nasty ideas, and she pulls a few other killer modules, old and new, from her closet for idea-fodder as well: *Tomb of Horrors*; *Temple, Tower, and Tomb*; *Labyrinth of Madness*; and various copies of *Dungeon® Adventures*. She makes a note to borrow copies of the Spelljammer *Monstrous Compendium* appendices from a friend, to search for horrible monsters and guardians to use in the adventure.

The next session of game play will be devoted to rolling up the new dragon PCs and going over basic rules. Lisa will also take time to type up a short, one-page background for the players on what life is like on Edill, what the PCs know about themselves and other dragons, and so on. They can select spells, pick out one or two minor magical items each, and conduct introductory role-playing to get everyone in the mood. The following week will bring the actual start of the adventure, with the sighting of the giant flying rock.

The Edill campaign has the potential of becoming an intermittent campaign, with a new adventure played for a few sessions every few months as a break from the normal routine. Some of the players might even buy miniature figures of their dragon characters and paint them up. It will certainly give everyone something exciting to talk about, and Lisa's reputation as a great DM will be secure.

Before she falls asleep that night, Lisa comes up with one last detail, something to really surprise the players. In the regular campaign, the wizard Mordenkainen has vanished and cannot be found. Lisa tossed the event in to throw the players off guard and force them to carry through the mission to recover the Cuthbert artifact without the wizard's assistance, though she hadn't decided what became of the renown spellcaster. Now she thinks, why not make him a prisoner of the undead red dragon? The PCs might rescue him without knowing at first who he was. The effect would be quite amusing and dramatic when the players figure it out. Mordenkainen would quickly thank the dragon PCs and *teleport* back to Oerth, only to find that the regular PCs fixed everything up while he was gone. He would reward the regular PCs, then have them go questing for treasures to send to the dragon PCs of Edill to reward *them*! That would tie off the loose ends quite nicely.

Other Thoughts

The two nonhuman campaigns described here were conceived of as short-term ones, used to fill time when a standard AD&D campaign is interrupted or has reached a nice stopping point. However, a nonhuman campaign could run as the main event, too. This possibility will be explored in a future installment. ❑

Conventions

Featuring Network Sanctioned Tournaments

ROC OF AGES `96

When: May 10–12 **Where:** Charlotte NC Held at the Sheraton Airport Plaza
What's Happening: Guests James Doohan, Gunnar Hansen, Barbra Leigh. Earthdawn, LIVING CITY™, Shadowrun, GURPS, Champions, M:tG
Cost: $25 at the door.
Contact: ROA, 105 Honeywood Ct, Kissimmee FL 34743; (407) 344-3010

BLUE WATER CON

When: Jun 8 **Where:** Point Huron MI – VFW Charles Schoor Post #796
What's Happening: Network events, M:tG tournaments, SPELLFIRE®, Battletech, Circus Imperium, Highlander, Amber, and much more.
Cost: $5 until June 1, $7 at the door
Contact: Heidi King, 1522 10th Ave. #5, Port Huron, MI 48060; (810) 982-3532

GAMEFEST

When: July 6
Where: Chicago IL–Held at the Holy Innocents Church, Fr. Pajek Hall
What's Happening: Events include a M:tG tournament; Network events
Cost: $5 at the door
Contact: John Kavain, 857 N Hermitage, Chicago, IL 60622; phone (312) 733-2395

CONLINE

When: Jul 27–28 **Where:** TSR Online RoundTable, GEnie
What's Happening: Great online gaming including five Network-sanctioned tournaments: LIVING CITY, LIVING JUNGLE, and Virtual Seattle! Workshops, seminars, guest speakers and more! Network clubs LAMP and UCC host.
Contact: **KNIGHT$@genie.com**

SAGA 96A

When: May 17–20
Where: Sussex NB (Canada)– Held at Mama's Two, Main St, Sussex NB. **Contact:** Timothy Smith (506) 433 6406 or write SAGA, PO Box 694, Sussex NB, Canada, E0E 1P0.

DEXCON 5

When and Where: July 10-14 in Somerset NJ – Atrium Park
What's Happening: This year Double Exposure brings you FIVE non-stop days of gaming enjoyment including the World Cosmic Encounters Championship, National Championships in the DRAGON DICE™ game, Othello, Blood Bowl, Talisman, and the Star Wars role-playing game. RPGA Network Coordinator Scott Douglas hosts the 2nd Annual Underwater DRAGON DICE Championships (swim fins and blueberry beverages optional). Arcane Circle hosts the Collectable Game Room. 20 RPGA Network tournaments, with six first-run LIVING CITY events. Zeno AND Navarre both available for LIVING CITY magic item trading! Two War modules! A Network Club decathlon event!

Plus: the ARENA–the largest convention battlefield in the world! 1,000 square feet of miniatures gaming excitement including Warhammer Fantasy, 40K, Orkfest, Ogre, Battletech, and the Star Wars Capital Ships Combat, hosted by Double Exposure and Sci-Fi Supply.
Cost: $50 until June 17; $65 at door.
Contact: Vinnie Salzillo, Double Exposure Inc., PO Box 3594 Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163; phone (718) 881-4575; email Salvius@panix.com

MAGE CON SOUTH XI

When: Aug 31–Sep 2 **Where:** Sioux City IA – Held at the Sioux City Hilton
What's Happening: Live action Vampire hosted by Wyrd Images of Kansas City; Mechwarrior 2; ASL tourney, art show
Cost: $20 weekend; daily prices available
Contact: David Glewwe, MAGE, PO Box 114, Sioux Center, IA 51250; (712) 722-1136

ECLIPSE `96

When: May 24–26 **Where:** Columbia MO Held at the Holiday Inn Expo Center
What's Happening: Network tournaments, RPGs, card games, and miniatures. Guests Tom Dowd, Tony DiTerlizzi, Lester Smith, Zeb Cook, Erick Wujcik.
Cost: $18 before 1 May, $20 at door.
Contact: Eclipse `96, 27 North 10th St, Columbia MO 65201.

GATEWAY 16

When: Aug 30 – Sep 2
Where: Los Angeles CA – Held at the Los Angeles Wyndham Hotel
What's Happening: Numerous roleplaying, card and miniatures games, RPGA Network games, and other events
Contact: Stategicon HQ at (818) 848 1748.

GAMEX 11

When: May 24–27 **Where:** Los Angeles CA – Held at the Los Angeles Wyndham
What's Happening: numerous games, RPGA® Network events (LIVING CITY), M:tG, and other events.
Contact: Strategicon HQ at (818) 848 1748.

ATCON II

When: Jun 20-23 **Where:** Austin TX
What's Happening: Network events, including eight LIVING adventures. Plus Clash of the Titans–an AD&D gladiatorial game with a special prize: a ticket to *ATSea*, G.O.A.T.'s eight-day gaming cruise!
Cost: $20 until May 15; $25 at the door
Contact: G.O.A.T., PO Box 3116, Austin TX 78764; (512) 443-4251

ACTION 2

When: Jul 20 **Where:** Des Moines IA
What's Happening: Sanctioned M:tG; LIVING CITY, Call of Cthulhu, and other Network AD&D game events; Vampire the Masquerade; Dragon Supreme
Cost: $4 at the door; preregistered judges are FREE!
Contact: Tammy Jones, 1304 Boyd St. Des Moines, IA 50316; (515) 266-2358

WINCON

When: Sep 13-15
Where: Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada
What's Happening: Circus Imperium, Highlander, AD&D game, Star Trek CCG, Star Wars, Warhammer 40K, M:tG
Cost: $20 until July; $25 until Aug 31
Contact: Wincon, P O Box 28073, 1453 Henderson Hwy, Winnipeg, MB R2G r#9, Telephone: 204-668-5614

3 RIVERS GAME FEST

When: May 24–27 **Where:** Pittsburgh PA – Held at the Greentree Marriott
What's Happening: RPGs (including Network events), regional M:tG tourney Guests: Peter Bromley, David Frank
Cost: $19.95 pre-reg.
Contact: Andon Unlimited, PO Box 1740, Renton WA 98057–1740; email: Andon@aol.com.

GLATHRICON

When: Jun 28–30 **Where:** Evansville IN–Held at the Holiday Inn–Airport
What's Happening: Several Living setting campaigns, novice– to paragon–level events and a very special game of Sim City (our memorial game to remember and honor our friend Steve Glimpse).
Contact: Toni Cobb, Glathricon, 2600 Hillcrest Terr., Evansville IN 47712.

DARK CON III

When: Jul 19–21 **Where:** Oklahoma City OK – Central Plaza Hotel
What's Happening: RPGA Network games, LARP Vampire, sanctioned M:tG tournaments, Dark-moore's "Player of the Year," guests Skip Williams, Mike Huebbe, Scott Douglas
Contact: Darkmoore Inc., 624 SW 24th, Moore OK, 73160; (405) 794-7624.

SHORECON `96

When: Sep 27–29 **Where:** Asbury Park NJ–Held at the Berkeley Carteret
What's Happening: Events include a masquerade ball, auction,and Network tournaments
Cost: $20 pre-reg, $25 at door
Contact: Multigenre Inc, 266 Spruce Dr Brick NJ 08723; phone (908) 262 9249.

BENCON '96

When: May 31–Jun 2 **Where:** Denver CO
What's Happening: Network events, including LIVING CITY, LIVING JUNGLE™, and a LIVING CITY Bazaar! M:tG, Paranoia, Megatraveller, TGA events. This entire event raises money for worthy charities!
Contact: R.M.B.G.A., PO Box 19232, Boulder, CO 80308-2232; (303) 466-2043; email: Dragon0525@aol.com

ORIGINS `96

When: Jul 4–7 **Where:** Columbus OH–Held at the Greater Columbus Convention Center and Hyatt Hotel **What's Happening:** RPGs, Network events, M:tG National Championship, numerous other games and events.
Contact: Andon Unlimited, PO Box 1740, Renton WA 98057–1740; email: Andon@aol.com.

QUINCON XI

When: Jul 19–21 **Where:** Quincy IL–Signature Room in the Franklin Square.
What's Happening: Illinois Highlander State Championship tourney and Network games
Cost: $15 for the weekend
Contact: Great River Gaming Guild, PO Box 3892, Quincy IL 62305–3892; phone (217) 224 3415

TOTALLY TUBULAR CON IV

When: Oct 18–20 **Where:** Fullerton CA
What's Happening: More like a large gaming party than a con, features RPGA Network games including first-run Living City and three-round round-robin events.
Cost: $25 until Oct 4; $30 at the door
Contact: Totally Tubular Con, PO Box 18791, Anaheim Hills, CA 92871-8791 or email: PartDragon@aol.com

ILLINICON '96

When: May 31–Jun 2 **Where:** Urbana IL
What's Happening: Network events, M:tG tournaments, RPG by NASCRAG, Doc Riley's two–round AD&D® Open
Cost: Weekend $5, additional $5 buys player tickets for all sessions.
Contact: email greggh@uxl.cso.uiuc.edu or write UGH, 904 W Green St, Urbana, IL 61801.

ATSEA '97

When and Where: April 5-12, 1997, sailing from New Orleans LA
What's Happening: This spectacular value features eight days of Caribbean frolic aboard Commodore Cruise Lines. 14 sanctioned RPGA Network events, including first-run LIVING CITY, LIVING JUNGLE, LIVING DEATH™ and Paragon level events; DRAGON DICE tournaments, Warhammer 40K, INWO, Battletech, Vampire, and Werewolf. Plus: special guest Jean Rabe!
Cost: All included for one low price; from $1099
Contact: G.O.A.T., PO Box 3116, Austin, TX 78764; (512) 443-4251

GAMMA CON

When: Oct 26--27 **Where:** Texarkana TX – Held at the Four Points by Sheraton
What's Happening: AD&D game events; art show and auction; dealer's room; costume ball and contest
Cost: $15 daily; weekend $25
Contact: Outpost Productions, 503 Courthouse Ave., New Boston, TX 75570; phone (903) 628-6298

Classifieds...

PUERTO RICO: Looking for any AD&D® 2nd edition players in range of the Guaynabo area to play. If interested, call I.B. Edmons at 789-9797 or write Extension Parkville, Z-1 Calle Colorado. Guaynabo, PR 00969-3924 (call preferred).

PEN PALS WANTED: Is there anybody out there in the night? I'm a lonely 17-year-old AD&D fan and a very big sword and sorcery fantasy fan in general, who is searching for pen pals all over the world who would like to exchange ideas about AD&D games and books. I'll answer any and all letters regardless of age, race, or sex. If interested, please write to: Jacek Biela, Am Lindenweg 3, 8230 Hartberg, Austria.

FLORIDA: I'm a recent resident of Tallahassee, FL. The move has caused me to become a dispossessed player/DM. I'm 20 years old and have been a player for 10 years. I have experience playing DARK SUN®, FORGOTTEN REALMS®, and am trying to learn BIRTHRIGHT™. I am willing to learn any world. Anyone interested in signing a new member can contact me, Greg Banks, at 312 Guy Strickland Rd., Crawfordville, FL 32327

MASSACHUSETTS: I'm looking for people in the MA area, preferably in or near Worcester to meet, play, and form a Network game club. Or wouldn't mind joining one. Also looking for people with good ideas to help me create a PBM system. If interested, please write to Sean Denaris, 134 Wilson St., Spencer, MA 01562

PEN PALS WANTED: I'm 26 years old and have been playing AD&D for about 12 years. Looking for pen pals (male or female) who like to share adventure ideas or just like to write. My favorites are the FORGOTTEN REALMS and GREYHAWK® with some SPELLJAMMER travel in between. Happy Gaming! John Hornbeck #H81034, California Correctional Institution, PO Box 608 Unit 2-8-80L, Tehachapi, CA 93581

OKLAHOMA: The Players' Guild of Central Oklahoma seeks interested gamers in the Oklahoma area. Currently in our sixth year, the PGCO emphasizes fun, cooperation, teamwork, and idea exchanges. Sound interesting? Send a 55¢ SASE to: PGCO c/o John Foster, PO Box 75834, Oklahoma City OK 73147–5834. Website:http://sooner.brightok.net/~JandK/index.html

OKLAHOMA: Want to see your budding writing talents in print? *Networks,* a bi–monthly publication of the Players' Guild of Oklahoma is a service to PGCO members. A sample copy of *Networks* containing submission guidelines, ad rates, membership info, and more can be obtained by writing to: Networks, c/o PGCO, PO Box 75834, Oklahoma City OK 73147–5834 (please send $1.50 for postage and handling). Email: jandk@brightok.net Website: http://sooner.brightok.net/~JandK/index.html Please specify vol 5; #1 (Jan/Feb '96)

PENNSYLVANIA: The DUNGEONEERS GAMING SOCIETY is a nationwide gaming organization based in Pittsburgh, PA. Hailed as one of the best in interactive gaming networks, we invite you to join the society! DGS membership is FREE and includes a FREE all-inclusive Membership Kit. Membership provides access to our unique House Network, QUEST Newszine, plus special events and activities. For more information, send SASE to: DGS, c/o Jennifer A. Martire, 1755 Potomac Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15216-1948, or email DGSNetwork@aol.com. For a sample issue of QUEST Newszine, send $1.00.

MARYLAND: Looking for players of AD&D 2nd Ed. Any experienced DMs welcome as well. Also looking for DRAGON® magazine back issues, #164 and earlier. Pen Pals willing to share ideas welcome. I am a member of a group of 10, 13 years as a player, 11 as DM, will play other games. Call 10am-10pm 410/819-8773.

BUYER/SELLER NETWORK: Is there something you want to buy or sell? Tell us and we'll find someone who has it or wants it. For every transaction, you pay us $1 or 10%, whichever is smaller. Write to: Steve Fletcher, 510-C West Harbison Rd, Pittsburgh, PA 15205or phone 412/787-7626.

MASSACHUSETTS: Hi. I'm a 14-year-old gamer looking to start a game in the Bristol-Plymouth area (PCs and CMs wanted). I play DARK SUN, AD&D, and Rifts. I'll play anything if you teach me how to play. So give me a buzz at 508/279-0867. Or write me: Zakk McGovern, 5 Terry Ln, Bridgewater, MA 02324.

FOR SALE: FIEND FOLIO® ($8), Lankhmar: City of Adventure ($10), Elves of Evermeet ($9), AL-QADIM® ($10), Ruins of Myth Drannor ($12), and Complete Ranger's Handbook ($10). Prices exclude shipping. Thuong Pham, 1763 Kenwood Pl., Costa Mesa, CA 92627 or call 714/631-2447.

WASHINGTON: I'm a 27-year-old player/DM looking for a group of mature gamers, 15 or older. Must be willing to travel to game. I am very familiar with AD&D 2nd Ed., Megatraveller, and Rifts; I have campaigns for all three. I am vaguely familiar with Star Trek, V&V, and Centurion. Contact Tony Leno at 360/658-8328 or write: 9532 65th Dr. NE, Marysville, WA 98270.

MASSACHUSETTS: Looking for people to play AD&D on Saturdays in a DRAGONLANCE® setting. Occasional DM switching. Contact Sean Denaris, 134 Wilson St., Spencer, MA 01562 or call 508/885-3637.

PENNSYLVANIA: I'm 15, male, and I'm looking to join or start a gaming club. I am experienced with FORGOTTEN REALMS, DRAGONLANCE, DARK SUN, and PLANESCAPE™. I'm willing to DM, but I'm not very good. If interested, contact Jonathan P. Longstaff, 3328 Paper Mill Rd., Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006, or email Hobbes40@aol.com.

PEN PAL: My name is Tracey, I'm looking for anyone that is very interested in writing about anything, especially D&D®. I really don't play any other game. I am completely hooked on it. Looking for someone who likes to talk about D&D or other topics of interest. I am 29 and would like to hear from anyone. 1594 Culver Dr., London, Ontario N5V 3L6, Canada. email: traceyp@webgate.net.

PBM: Join the Champions of the Golden Dragon. The cost is $8 ($7 for RPGA members) for 4 issues of the Newszine. A Network-chartered club, we are a PBM club, play several PBM games, with more in the works. Contact Steve Fletcher, 510-C West Harbison Rd, Pittsburgh, PA 15205 or phone (412) 787-7626.

SELL OR TRADE: Numerous DRAGON magazines (starting at issue 13), also Star Wars, GURPS, and other game materials. Too many to list. Sends SASE: Ric Tawney, Spectre Gaming Club, 1928 Stow St., Simi Valley, CA 93063. (805) 526-1261.

CALLING ALL D&D and AD&D players and DMs. I am Dungeon Master Chris Brown and I wish to purchase the following TSR books and modules: D&D Expert rule books, D&D Companion rule books, B1-B12, CM1-CM9, DA1-DA4, DDA1-DDA4, HWA1-HWA3, HWQ1, HWR1-HWR3, IM1-IM3, M1-M5, PC4, X1-X13, I1-I13, S1-S4. Please contact: Christopher L Brown, 750 Tall Oaks Dr., Blacksburg, VA 24060, or call 540/ 953-1501.

ANNOUNCING A NEW Electronic Mail List for gamers in the Northeast United States. NEGNET provides an ideal forum for gamers to discuss ideas on a wide variety of gaming topics. To subscribe to this list, send email to MAJORDOMO@LISTS.NEU.EDU The body of this message should read "SUBSCRIBE NEGNET" and nothing more. We look forward to seeing you online!

MARYLAND: Existing Mage: The Ascension group seeks players in DC Metro area to join us in Gaithersburg. We are 20-something professionals seeking same. Call Frank: 202/383-5318.

Dispel Confusion

New Book for the LIVING CITY™ Campaign and Other Rulings

Faiths & Avatars is now the official TSR reference for powers and their religions in the FORGOTTEN REALMS® setting. We have reviewed this excellent book and will introduce parts of it into the LIVING CITY campaign.

Allowed Character Classes

Several new priest sub-classes are introduced in *Faiths & Avatars*. While some are not suited to the LIVING CITY campaign, others will be allowed. Players with priest characters may now choose from the cleric, druid, crusader, monk, or specialty priest sub-classes. Clerics and druids may be played as described in either the *Player's Handbook* or *Faiths & Avatars*. All racial restrictions apply, as do those given under a specific deity. For example, priests of Ilmater may be clerics, specialty priests, and monks; you cannot play a crusader of Ilmater.

All priests use the cleric's experience table for advancement, as printed in the *PHB*. Druids use the druid's table in the *PHB*. Ignore the experience point tables given in *Faiths &Avatars*.

Both the monk sub-class and the Joy-dancers of Lliira use unarmed combat rules as described below.

Powers and Specialty Priests

With the expanded descriptions of the powers and their churches, many of the specialty priests for the powers have gained new or different powers. We are therefore changing the character generation rules regarding priest. The new rule reads:

Priests may worship any non-evil deity found in the FORGOTTEN REALMS boxed set or *Faiths & Avatars* book, but may not worship a "designed faith" from the *Complete Priest's Handbook* such as War, Agriculture, Magic, etc.

Specialty priests may select one of the following gods from the FORGOTTEN REALMS Adventures book or the *Faiths & Avatars* book: Azuth, Chauntea, Denier, Eldath, Gond, Helm, Ilmater, Lathander, Lliira, Mielikki, Milil, Mystra, Oghma, Selune, Silvanus, Sune, Tempus, Torm, Tymora, and Tyr. Specialty priests may choose to follow the class abilities given in either *FORGOTTEN REALMS Adventures* or *Faiths & Avatars*. In addition, all priests of one of these listed powers may use the new spells given in *Faiths & Avatars*. Only priests of a certain god can use that god's spells; for example, priest of Oghma can use the new Oghma spells but priests of Denier cannot.

Demi-human specialty priests have the option of choosing instead one of the following demi-human deities from the *Monster Mythology* handbook (Demi-human materials do not change).

Specialty priests of powers not yet included may be added at a later time. Until then, only the cleric sub-class will be allowed for non-listed, non-evil powers.

Unarmed Combat Rules

The LIVING CITY campaign will now allow barehanded combat, using the unarmed combat rules from the *DUNGEON MASTER® Guide* and the *Complete Fighter's Handbook*, including specialization in unarmed combat styles and martial arts. No other unarmed combat rules will be used.

House rule: unarmed combat means "unarmed" combat, which we will refer to as barehanded combat. No weapons may be used, no gloves worn, no items worn on the hand or carried in the hand that change the damage done may be used in barehanded combat. This includes brass knuckles, spiked gauntlets, gauntlets of ogre power, and even oil of impact; all such items may not be used to alter to hit or damage values in barehanded combat. Items that change strength without being worn on the hand can be used in barehanded combat: e.g. girdles of giant strength, potions of giant strength, etc.

Unarmed combat specialization is available to all characters, but only single-classed (not multi- or dual-classed) fighters or fighting monks (as described in *Faiths & Avatars*) may specialize in more than one form (punching, wrestling, martial arts) as described on pages 77 and 78 of the *Complete Fighter's Handbook*. In addition, these characters may use continuing specialization. However, when such a specialist changes classes (as in dual-class) the character must henceforth abide by the restriction of the new class, even after the character exceeds the level of the first class.

How to Modify Your Character (if necessary)

We want new possibilities to enhance the game. However, please observe these simple rules when modifying your existing character:

- You may not re-make your character. You must keep the same class and deity as you have now. If you want to play a monk of Ilmater, start a new character. Similarly, if your character is now a specialty priest, you may not change to cleric; you must stay a specialty priest.
- You may convert your specialty priest from the old book's powers to the new if desired.
- You must make ability score adjustments to meet any new class minimums if you change to the *Faiths & Avatars* version of the specialty priest for your power. Make the minimum change you can to comply with the restrictions.
- You may use the descriptions of specialty priest abilities from either the *Faiths & Avatars* version or the *FORGOTTEN REALMS Adventures* version of the rules. You may not blend these rules, however.

Retiring Characters

If you retire your character and start a new one, you cannot bestow your old character's magical items on the new one.

Answering LIVING CITY Questions

We want to answer your questions on the LIVING CITY campaign. However, there is a lot of campaign material, and we do not have it all memorized. Therefore, please do not ask us to make decisions in person or on the phone. Please do submit questions by post or email, and we will happily respond. Frequently asked questions will be answered in POLYHEDRON® Newszine. ❑

The Ravens Bluff Trumpeter

Editor-in-Chief: Fred Faber
City News: Clio Hesperin
Society Editor: Jacinth Moonspring

Nioga Named Commander of the Bloody Hatchets

With the untimely death of Commander Hassen, General Obspieri chose Lieutenant Nioga to command the Company of the Bloody Hatchets, the city's most fanatical fighting unit. Hassen fell in combat early this tenday when the Bloody Hatchets engaged part of the enemy's main mercenary force in a pincer action that included three cavalry companies and over 100 foot troops. The attack was routed, but the enemy took heavy losses. The Bloody Hatchets, showing fearlessness bordering on reckless, drove through the mercenary lines and slew many before being forced to retreat.

Lord Mayor O'Kane praised the selection of Nioga, a dedicated soldier and friend of Ogrebane. Field Marshal Lord Blacktree approved the promotion after much consideration. Despite Commander Nioga's distinguished military career, many nobility speculate that he was promoted because of his recent marriage to General Obspieri's cousin.

The Bloody Hatchets themselves support Nioga. One soldier from the Company said, "Nioga is the number one man now. That **** Ogrebane didn't pick no one else cause he knew we Hatchets would've tore out his bloody heart." Other members of the company also reacted favorably to the promotion.

Adventure. Excitement. Challenge.

They don't just happen. You earn them. With sweat and skill and sacrifice. But the rewards are greater than you ever imagined. Interested? Talk to your Ravens Bluff army recruiter.

(send your character to HQ. specify "army")

Reporter Killed in Gang War

A recent outbreak in hostilities among the thief gangs has resulted in the death of a Trumpeter Reporter. The body of Gandalf Wishspoon, our reporter investigating gang war in the Crow's End and Harbor districts, was found in an alley last tenday with a dagger in his back.

The single dagger is known in Crow's End as the Black Talon gang's "traitor's reward." However, gangs have been using each others' signals and methods lately to confuse the Watch. No arrests have been made.

This death is the latest in a series of violent crimes in the Crow's End district. Since the pirate attack on the dock, Harbor Patrol has been left in the wake of an escalating crime rate in the Harbor District. Dockside gangs, expanding their operations, threaten Crow's End territory. Reserve guardsmen, untrained in investigation and gang relations, are unable to help.

An unnamed Watch spokesman says that the enemy leader fosters gang war for his or her own ends. Gang members would not comment. As we mourn the death of a friend and colleague, the future of Ravens Bluff looks more uncertain each day.

Society News

Loyal readers, and those of you just learning to read, life is certainly not "back to normal," but it's beginning to look that way. I find it interesting and gratifying that people push away things which they can do nothing about. Why, even those in power revert to their selfish interests in the heat of a crisis. This month has seen a rush of activities with a distinctly personal flavor.

First, a quick trip through the ongoing saga of **Lord Charles Blacktree** and **Lady Katharine Marie Moorland**. Even though the lady is married to **Deputy Mayor Fife** (played by Mike Capps of NC), it seems that all might not be roses in paradise. More than one source has reportedly seen Blacktree and Moorland secluded together in her private gazebo. I have it on good information that they've been exchanging more than glances!

On the continuing story of the Golden Roosters: it is well known that one of their newer and more prominent members, **Lorien Keltree Darkarrow** (played by Dan Donnelly of GA), has proclaimed he will single-handedly lead the charge to restore honor to the Roosters. Some, however, doubt his sincerity. Well-placed insiders at the Roost have already confirmed that the Leadership Circle of the knightly order is bringing Darkarrow up on charges, not the least of which is "conduct unbecoming a Rooster." This all stems from Darkarrow's honor challenge to Blacktree at the ill-fated Winter Games. Several highly placed Roosters apparently think Darkarrow should have been at the front with Blacktree rather than shmoozing with his friend Belanor. Could it be that Blacktree still has friends within the Rooster knights?

It was recently overheard at the House of Thud that **Benzoate Glycol** (played by Jean Rabe of WI), a fighter of some renown but little common sense, proposed marriage to priestess **Tellasi Salilei** (played by Steve Null of CA), a recent convert to the Lliiran faith. When pressed for confirmation, Glycol responded, "I did? How about that!" The priestess of joy could not be reached for comment. However, new **High RevelMistress Merry Albright** of the Living City Temple of Lliira confirmed that a party is planned for the date of the wedding (though the party was probably planned before the marriage proposal).

Finally, on the political front, word is spreading that Thay recalled **Ambassador Kendrick Brimstone**, a favorite among both the nobility and the adventuring population. Whether this is due to the war, his treatment of the citizens of our fair city, or something more involved, is unknown. Brimstone announced that he is taking a short leave and a temporary ambassador would serve in the interim, but he has not answered or even listened to any questions on the matter. As always, details will go to you when they come to me.

Society column written by Wayne S. Melnick of FL. If you have printworthy news to share, contact Wayne c/o RPGA Network or directly by e-mail at "Cateyes01@aol.com".

Notes from HQ

Rights and Responsibilities

I got a disturbing letter this month, and I couldn't put it out of my mind. I tried to answer it and couldn't. The letter made me mad. Not mad at the author, but mad.

You see, when I joined the Network, I had a vision of what I expected.

I assumed I had joined a group of individuals who intended to promote the hobby, like members of support organizations for other hobbies, like model train builders or Harley-Davidson owners. Such organizations have a somewhat democratic process for deciding leadership and action. Such groups usually have bylaws and articles of organization to guide that process.

When I joined this organization I assumed its members had already agreed on a process to support that vision.

But I've been a member for seven years and I've never seen an organizational charter, list of bylaws, or any sort of democratic process. I think it's high time.

In August, we're going to publish a different kind of Newszine, the "Welcome to the RPGA® Network" issue. It will contain vital information on most Network programs. But I'd also like it to contain the seeds for a vision for the future. Our future, and the Network's.

Here's my proposal: I want to formulate a list of member rights and responsibilities. I want them in print so we all know where we stand. I want to solicit those rights and responsibilities from you. And I want you to ratify them.

Here's an existing (though unwritten) example: You pay hard-earned dollars for your membership. You have a right to expect your POLYHEDRON® Newszine to be interesting, helpful, and arrive in good condition in a timely manner. You have the responsibility to tell us what you want to see in the Newszine, and to inform us when you move so we can get your Newszine to you.

So, I ask you what the rights and responsibilities of Network members should be. Send them to us through the Postal Service or by email. I'll list them in the August issue and ask you to vote for the ones you think optimize Network performance. We'll print a final list in the December issue and include it in new member material.

Note: there are no rights without responsibilities. Proposed rights without an equal number of corresponding responsibilities will be discarded.

We'd like to use the rights and responsibilities to establish a member's-eye view of the Network, so that we can formulate bylaws and a member-driven administrative process in the next year or two.

My thanks to the author of that letter, Jennifer, for getting this thing rolling. It's long overdue.

GEN CON® Game Fair Update

Slot Zero Update

In case you were put off of judging LIVING CITY™ by the slot zero policy given last issue, we want you to know that you can still judge LIVING™ events without playing in a slot zero or being part of a judge group. Further, we will do our best to set up slot zeroes for everyone who wants to play in one. However, we would prefer you judge at least two slots of any LIVING event, and all three slots of a single LIVING CITY event, in exchange for this effort on our part.

Judges Needed

We still need lots of judges to help us run the most ambitious Network program in recent years. We have scheduled 26 events plus the Interactive, and that means we need lots of help. Please consider judging if you have three slots you can spare. Judges pay only $15 (Network member discount already included), whereas pre-registrants pay $45. You can't beat that—three slots of showing players a great time and a reduced rate.

We especially need judges for the DRAGONLANCE® FIFTH AGE™ Special. This is a brand new game system from TSR, and we expect a lot of people to play the event. Judges who sign up for three slots of the Special will receive a complimentary copy of the game well in advance of the Game Fair. An expert will be available at the Wednesday member's meeting to answer questions about the game.

If your judging talent is in Amber, Ars Magica, Call of Cthulhu, Shadowrun, or any of the other games we planned that aren't AD&D, please offer us the option of scheduling you to judge these events. Finding judges at the last minute is much easier for AD&D games than for these others. ❑

Decathlon Update

Tournament events and deadlines. More TBA.

Convention	When	Deadline	Event
Twin Con, Minneapolis, MN	May	Past	Shadowrun, *Call Me Ishmael*
Ben Con, Denver, CO	May	Past	AD&D® Benefit, *Eusaria*
Ben Con Team Event	May	Past	AD&D, *Tensions*
Games Caucus, San Francisco, CA	May	Past	LIVING CITY, *Special Delivery*
Contario, Toronto, Ontario	Jun	May 15	Paranoia Event
Dragon*Con, Atlanta, GA	Jun	May 15	RAVENLOFT®, *Doorway to Darkness*
Dragon*Con Team Event	Jun	May 15	AD&D, *The Fourth Wish*
Phenomenon, Queanbayan, AUS	Jul	May 30	Shadowrun, *Zero G*
Origins, Columbus, OH	Jul	May 30	Masterbook: Species, *Capital Offenses*
DexCon, Somerset, NJ	Jul	May 30	AD&D DARK SUN®, *Reciprocity*
Darkcon, Oklahoma City, OK	Jul	May 30	LIVING JUNGLE™, *For Chief and Tribe*
GEN CON Game Fair, Milwaukee, WI	Aug	Jul 5	AD&D Benefit, *There is a Tide*
GEN CON Team Event	Aug	Jul 5	AD&D, *Votan's Fire*
AndCon, Toledo, OH	Sep	Aug 15	LIVING DEATH™, *Revenge of the Haunted Mine*

GEN CON® 1996 GAME FAIR - NETWORK JUDGE REGISTRATION

Don't delay - Sign up to judge today!
Circle the events you want to judge. The sooner you sign up, the more tables we can offer.

Day of Week	Thursday				Friday				Saturday				Sun
Slot #	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Time of Day	8	12	4	8	8	12	4	8	8	12	4	8	8
AD&D® Open, three-round team elimination *Seven More Parts* by Skip Williams		J	J	J		J	J	J		J	S	S	F
AD&D Feature, three-round elimination *Thieves' Gambit* by A. Karl Larsen and Joseph G. Wichman	J			J		J		J	S	S		F	
AD&D Rats, two-round elimination *Rats Forever* by Kevin Melka		J				J	J				F		F
AD&D Masters, two-round elimination, *Members Only* *Ghost Story* by Joyce and Curt Rauschenberger			J				J	J	J		F		F
AD&D RAVENLOFT® Game *Cry Little Sister* by Brandon G. Amancio	J			J			J				J		J
DRAGONLANCE®: FIFTH AGE™ Special Dragons of Terror by Steve Miller			J			J				J		J	J
AD&D Grand Masters, *Members Only* *Slaves of Justhaven* by Scott Douglas & Craig Petillo								J		J			
AD&D Paragon, *Member's Only* *The Winds of Change* by Brett and Cyndi Bakke		J							J				
AD&D Benefit *There is a Tide ...* by Robert Wiese		J	J					J	J	J		J	
AD&D Network Clubs, two-round elimination *Votan's Fire* by Death Warmed Over				J				J				F	F
AD&D LIVING CITY™ Benefit, *Members Only* *Destrider's Despair* by Capt. David Kelly			J				J						J
AD&D LIVING CITY Feature, *Members Only* *The Orcslayer Scroll* by David W. Baker	J							J				J	
AD&D LIVING CITY Game Fair Exclusive, *Members Only* *A Wish for Temptation* by Glen R. Goodwin		J				J			J				
AD&D LIVING CITY Interactive, *Members Only* Interactive game with your LC character										V	V		
AD&D LIVING DEATH™ Feature, *Members Only* *London's Foggy Streets* by Gary Labrecque		J					J			J		J	
AD&D LIVING DEATH Enigma, *Members Only* *The Lost Valley* by John D. Rateliff			J					J			J		J
AD&D LIVING JUNGLE™ Feature, *Members Only* *The Curse of Fire Mountain* by John Ireland	J					J					J		J
AD&D LIVING JUNGLE Challenge, *Members Only* *Thunder Lizard* by Tom Prusa			J				J		J			J	
Amber Feature *The Trump Gallery* by Erick Wujick			J					J		J			
Ars Magica Feature *A Horse is a Horse, of Course* by Sheldon Menery							J			M			
Masterbook: Bloodshadows Feature *Death Before Deception* by Brandon G. Amancio								J				M	
Call of Cthulhu Feature *The Eternal City* by Jeff Kennedy		M				J				J		J	
Earthdawn: Threads of Legend *The Map Maker's Riddle* by Drew Caldwell					J				J				
Paranoia Feature *Flee Market* by Donald J. Bingle	J						M					J	
Rolemaster Feature, three-round team elimination *The Mask of Destiny* by ICE Staff		J	J	J		J		S	S		F		
Shadowrun Virtual Seattle Feature *A Late Night's Shopping* by Geoff Skellams				M		J			J		J		
Star Wars Feature *Alliance Training Mission #3* by Lisa Reinke & Rex Polley			J								J		M
Underground Feature *Putting the Casual Back in Casualty* by Doug Tabb		P		P							P		
Volunteer	V	V	V	V		V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V

J = Judge S = Judge Semi-final F = Judge Final M = Optional Masters Event P = No Judges Needed V = Volunteer

THE 29TH ANNUAL

1996 GEN CON® GAME FAIR

HEAR YE, HEAR YE!

RPGA Network Members!

Judges Needed for 1996 GEN CON® Game Fair

The RPGA® Network is proud to support the 1996 GEN CON Game Fair with all-new tournaments, informative seminars, and special events for our members.

Judges make this all possible. Almost 300 judges are needed for the Game Fair, and *the earlier that you volunteer, the more tables we can offer.* First time judges and veterans are equally needed, and equally welcome.

The benefits of judging include:

- **Giving others a great time.**
- **Paying only $15 to get into the Game Fair if you judge 3 or more slots and are a Network member. We can only consider judges who run three or more events.**
- **Getting points in the Network's International Ranking system.**

AUGUST 8 - 11, 1996
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Members who judge Network events pay only $15 admission to the entire Game Fair. Non-member judges pay $30. Join today!

If you are not running your own events at the Game Fair, this form and a check or money order for the appropriate admission fee will get you registered for the convention—provided you are accepted as a judge. You must still pay for any events you register to play; the above fee is your discounted admission to the Game Fair as a judge for the Network. You can register for events using the Pre-Registration booklet, which will be mailed this spring.

If you plan to attend the Game Fair and would like to help the Network by judging our events, please complete this form, enclose a check or money order made out to GEN CON Game Fair, and mail it to:

GEN CON Game Fair 1996
Network Judge Appeal - Sandy Kinney
201 Sheridan Springs Road
Lake Geneva, WI 53147

RPGA® NETWORK

Get your preferred slots by signing up today.

Network Membership Number (& Judge Rank) _____ Date _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Day Phone _____ Eve Phone _____ E-mail _____

There are two ways to sign up to judge:

1 - The "I Prefer" Way
Use the grid on back to choose your events and slots

2 - The "Where Needed" Way
Use the section below to indicate general availability

I am willing to judge any Network event that uses these rules: _____

_____

I am available during these slots (minimum of three) that I have marked.

Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
___slot 1 (8 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.)	___slot 5 (No events)	___slot 9 (8 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.)	___slot 13 (8 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.)
___slot 2 (Noon to 3:45 p.m.)	___slot 6 (Noon to 3:45 p.m.)	___slot 10 (Noon to 3:45 p.m.)	
___slot 3 (4 p.m. to 7:45 p.m.)	___slot 7 (4 p.m. to 7:45 p.m.)	___slot 11 (4 p.m. to 7:45 p.m.)	
___slot 4 (8 p.m. to 11:45 p.m.)	___slot 8 (8 p.m. to 11:45 p.m.)	___slot 12 (8 p.m. to 11:45 p.m.)	

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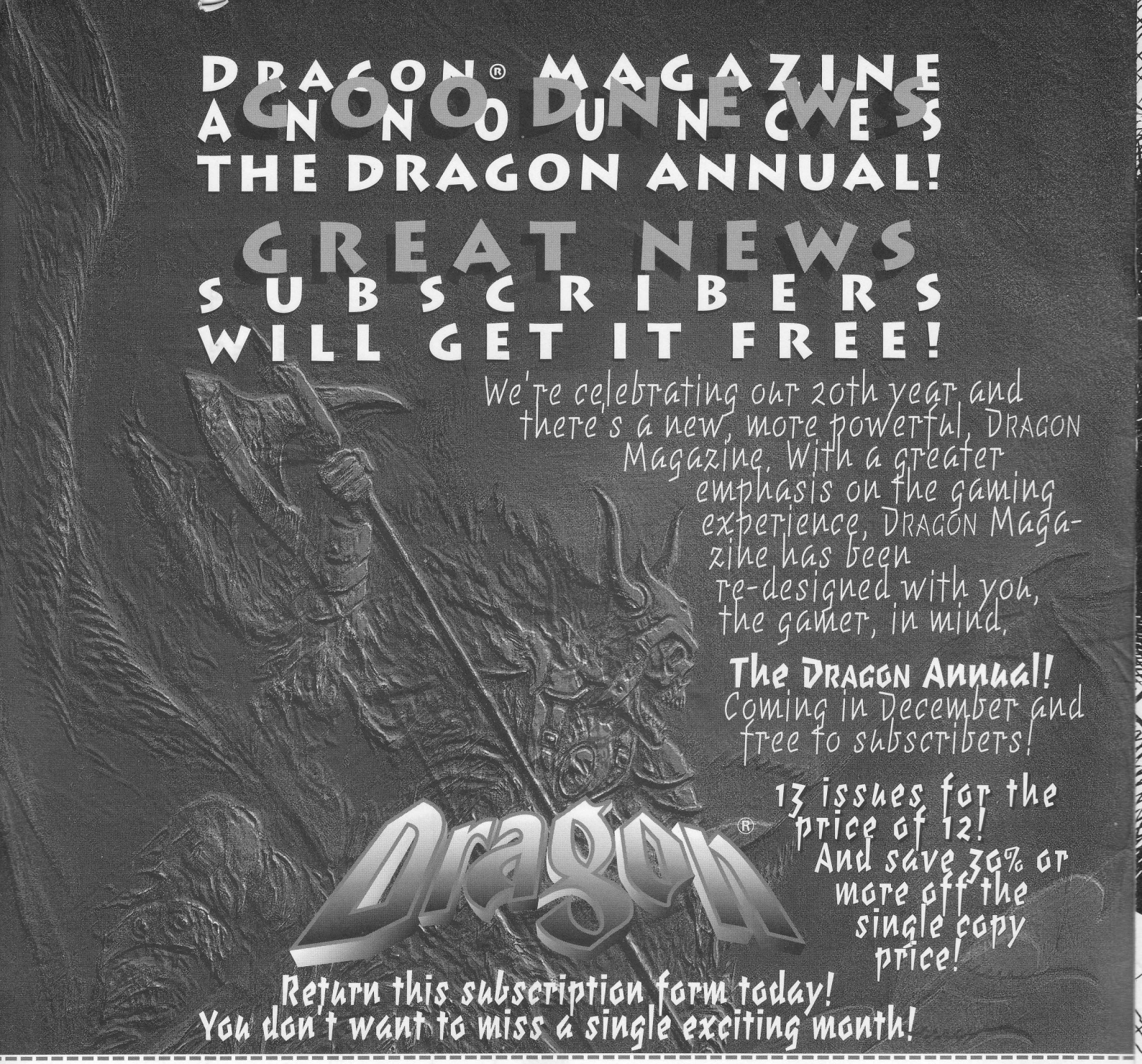

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